

# **Adapted Global Assessment of the National Statistical System of the Republic of Belarus**

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## PREFACE

The Adapted Global Assessment (AGA) of the national system of official statistics of the Republic of Belarus was undertaken in the framework of the Eurostat funded project 'Global assessments of statistical systems of candidate and potential candidate countries as well as ENP countries'. ICON-INSTITUT Public Sector GmbH, a company under contract with Eurostat, was responsible for organising all activities and tasks related to the AGA.

The AGA process was initiated by Eurostat on request of the National Statistics Committee (NSC) made in March 2010 to agree in principle on the implementation of an adapted global assessment, and confirmed in 2012 setting also dates for the assessment missions. The assessment was conducted by the following AGA team of experts: Mr Richard Laux (UK) who was the leading expert, Mr Gabriel Gamez (UNECE), Ms Claudia Junker (Eurostat), Ms Bronislava Kaminskiene (Statistics Lithuania), and Mr Hans Viggo Sabo (EFTA). The assessment findings are based on an extensive review performed during assessment missions during the periods 22-27 October 2012 and 20-22 March 2013. Many internal and external partners were met (see *Annex 3*). Written material was made available by the National Statistical Committee in advance or during the assessment mission. Major sources used for this evaluation included replies to a questionnaire sent out in advance to NSC, covering main institutional, formal and practical issues as well as information on statistical domains.

The assessment team very much appreciates the openness of communication both with staff of NSC and with representatives from other partner and stakeholder organisations. The team hopes that the assessment will be of benefit to the further development of NSC.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The main goal of the Adapted Global Assessment (AGA) of the National Statistical System (NSS) of the Republic of Belarus is to evaluate the level of conformity vis-à-vis European standards, incorporating the UN Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, the European Statistics Code of Practice (ESCOP), as well as the Eurostat Statistical Requirements Compendium. Through this process the AGA supports the improvement of the NSS and its alignment with European and international recommendations, standards and best practices.
2. The main elements of the Belarus statistical system are:
  - a) the system of state statistics bodies comprises the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus (NSC, or Belstat) and territorial bodies of state statistics (regional and Minsk city), which include statistical divisions in districts and cities (districts of Minsk city). Belstat is the main producer of official statistics in Belarus and the coordinator of activities of other state bodies and other organisations in the field of state statistics.
  - b) authorised state organisations – government agencies (organisations), excluding state statistics bodies, which maintain state statistics in relation to organisations subordinated to them (under their supervision), and also on issues falling under their jurisdiction.
  - c) The Interagency Council on State Statistics (Interagency Council) is the advisory body established by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus in order to ensure coordinated decision-making in the field of state statistical surveys on the basis of scientifically proved statistical methodology.
3. The overall organisational structure of Belstat reflects statistical production processes based on exhaustive (complete) data collection (state statistical reports) at the territorial level and the final aggregation, validation and dissemination of the statistical information at the national level. This organisation of statistical production not only places a high burden on respondents but involves most of the human and financial resources of the system being employed at the stage of data collection (in the regions) – to the detriment of Belstat, where the improvement and development of statistical products requested by national and international users would require additional resource.
4. Belstat is in the process of improving its production processes and organisational structure along with the modernisation of the IT infrastructure and the development of new methods of data collection. The transition to electronic data reporting and the introduction of the Single Information System of State Statistics will be an opportunity to review the structure and the role of Belstat's territorial statistical bodies. Resources that are at present allocated to data entry in regions and districts could be gradually transferred to Belstat.
5. Regional statistical publications and datasets are currently produced by territorial statistical bodies, and national information with some regional disaggregation by Belstat. Greater use of modern information technologies would allow users to gain access to regional and district statistical information from a single web portal managed by Belstat. Furthermore, the availability of online databases allowing users to select, extract and generate tailor-made tables, charts and graphs are likely to reduce ad hoc requests for data at regional levels. Territorial statistical bodies could

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focus on communication with the local media, administrative bodies, and businesses, and free up resources that could be used more effectively by Belstat.

6. The Assessment team supports the ongoing modernisation and reorganisation of the existing system of computing centres of Belstat (CCs) into two subordinated bodies – a central computer centre with 6 branches, and an information and dissemination centre. In the medium term, the 3-layer structure of Belstat – with the headquarters, 7 regional statistical departments and in particular 133 district statistical divisions – could be gradually simplified along with the further development of information and communication technologies. In the long term, ICT developments may enable further rationalisation and integration in the organisational structure of Belstat. A full integration of the activities of the ICC within the structure of Belstat could lead to positive synergies with other horizontal services already existing in the central office, and might avoid the duplication of tasks.
7. The Assessment team has not made any over-arching recommendations relating to organisational structures, in recognition of its support for the approach that Belstat is currently taking. However, a number of detailed recommendations (set out below) are intended to inform and shape Belstat’s work in this area.
8. The legal basis of official statistics – referred to in law as state statistics, a term which could usefully be replaced as part of a suite of measures to emphasise professional independence – is well-developed, and responsive to changing needs. However, in a number of important respects the existing legal framework should be updated to reflect the provisions of the European Statistics Code of Practice (ESCOP) and to reflect technological developments. Whilst there is a substantial overlap between the Law on State Statistics (LSS) and the principles of ESCOP, there are a number of specific elements of ESCOP which are not apparent or fully articulated in the LSS.
9. The Assessment team recommends that Belstat should:
  - R1 Clarify the delineation of the NSS in the statistical law.
  - R2 Define criteria for other producers of state statistics, and clarify that their statistical activities are governed by the statistical law and follow the ESCOP, and ensure that the legal basis of these other producers of state statistics explicitly refer to their statistical activities.
  - R3 Review the responsibilities of Belstat and the appropriate Ministries with a view to developing a clearer, more efficient system of collecting and processing data; make appropriate legal changes as necessary.
  - R4 Describe the principle of ‘Professional Independence’ in the Statistical Law – including the mandate and appointment procedures for the Chair (instead of spreading it over other legal acts).
  - R5 Ensure that the statistical law gives the Chairman of Belstat full managerial autonomy, including for the allocation of resources.
  - R6 Review the feasibility and desirability of linking Census data with other data; if appropriate, make the necessary changes to the legislation for the next Census.
  - R7 Reinforce and make more explicit the co-ordination role of Belstat in the statistical law.
  - R8 Strengthen the emphasis on ‘meeting user needs’ in the Statistical Law; in doing so, consider replacing the term ‘state statistics’ by ‘official statistics’.

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- R9 Strengthen the emphasis on ‘quality’ (in the design, production and reporting on state statistics) in the Statistical Law.
- R10 Ensure that the statistical law enables the production and provision of microdata relating to individuals, households and businesses.
- R11 Amend the legal confidentiality protection to explicitly include former staff of Belstat.
- R12 Give the Interagency Council responsibility for (a) approving the list of producers of official statistics; and (b) approving the incorporation of their statistical activities into the programme of work.
- R13 Ensure that the composition of the Interagency Council, and its remit, are a function of the Chairman of Belstat (rather than being determined by the Council of Ministers). As part of this, either extend the membership to include a wider range of users, or establish a new Statistical Council with such a membership.
- R14 Ensure that statistical information – including that from new surveys – must, in law, be published as soon as it is available, with no prior access to the Government.
10. Belstat has a clear mandate for data collection, and the statutory right of access to administrative data from many different Ministries and agencies. Steps should be taken to increase transparency about flows of data and statistical information, and to review whether some Ministerial data collection exercises are for administrative purposes or are of a genuinely statistical nature.
11. There is a comprehensive system of state statistical surveys in Belarus. Belstat has a strong coordination role, covering both methodology and the content of surveys, which helps to avoid duplication and minimise the response burden. The number of forms has been reduced in recent years. The strategy to improve forms, increase the use of administrative data and implement electronic reporting is appropriate. More use of survey sampling in the domain of business statistics should be considered (R29, R63).
12. The Assessment team considers that Belstat should:
- R15 Ensure that the provisions of *Article 9* of the LSS on access to administrative and register based data are fully implemented and extended to all producers of official statistics.
- R16 Publish, on Belstat’s website, the list of the institutions with which a data interaction agreement has been concluded, including information on data sets and frequency – in order to improve transparency and accountability.
- R17 Make, and operationalise, a clear distinction between ministries and agencies that collect data for exclusive statistical purposes (following the provisions of the LSS) and other organisations collecting data primarily for their own management purposes (administrative data providers) under their own rules and regulations.
13. The mid-term and short planning system is comprehensive and covers all producers of state statistics, as well as all regional levels. However, it is rather input oriented, and there is a need for more coherence between strategies and plans, and for published reports setting out the extent to which plans were realised. Proposals to record labour input and the implementation of an automated planning and control system are good.

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14. The Assessment team recommends that Belstat should:
- R18 Strengthen the Statistical Strategy and the Statistical Work Programme by:
    - extending them to include both the outputs and the sources of the other producers of state statistics;
    - improving the linkage between strategic development and operational activities as foreseen in the statistical programmes, with resource appropriation from the Republican budget;
    - basing them on explicit, defined user needs; including high level information about costs; and
    - referring explicitly to Belstat’s coordinating function.
  - R19 Ensure that the relationship between the Statistical Strategy and Annual Work Programmes is explicit; and ensure that both are endorsed by Government and are suitably resourced.
  - R20 Streamline planning and control processes; and delineate strategic programming and associated (relevant) planning.
15. Belstat seems to have access to state funding sufficient for its core statistical activities but is short of funding for some more future oriented tasks as well as for the maintenance of a modern infrastructure (software, computers, buildings etc). Additional income can be generated by certain activities but this income is relatively low. Belstat appears to have access to some extra state funding for substantial infrastructure development tasks (such as the Integrated Information System for State Statistics) and survey operations (population census) – but it is not evident that such extra funding streams will always be available when needed.
16. Salary levels appear to be sufficient to retain qualified staff in the territorial bodies of state statistics, reflecting the less developed labour market and job opportunities in the regions. However, the Assessment team was concerned that salaries seem insufficient to retain qualified staff in the head-quarters and territorial body of Minsk City due to more attractive job offers in the capital.
17. As part of an order of the Head of State, Belstat will be required to reduce the number of civil servants that it employs by 23% – by July 2013. The Assessment team considers that the scale of this reduction is realistic, but that the timing is very challenging. Meeting the Government’s target will have substantial adverse implications for the range of statistical outputs produced by Belstat and/or their quality, accuracy and timeliness. Significant reprioritisation, informed by discussion with key users, will be required.
18. Belstat staff appear to be professional, enthusiastic and committed. A training programme is in place, and Belstat operates succession planning arrangements. However, there would be advantages both to individuals and the organisation from encouraging junior staff to work on cross-cutting projects. There would also be merit in exploring the feasibility and practicality of flexible working arrangement, that might enhance staff satisfaction and increase productivity.
19. Over and above the potential efficiency improvements that might be made across Belstat as a whole (see *paragraphs 4-6* above), there would be merit in reviewing (a) whether it would be more effective and efficient to have a dedicated team of methodologists, rather than having this type of expertise spread across the

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- organisation; and (b) whether the capacity and capability of the Press Office should be strengthened (R45).
20. Belstat has ambitious plans to develop its statistical activities. The Assessment team applauds this spirit, but is conscious that new work imposes burdens. The Assessment team considers that Belstat should review the genuine need for information from its proposed Time Use Survey in the light of other priorities. In a similar vein, plans for developing environmental accounts are ambitious and, if this work does proceed, it will be important to follow a step by step strategy, taking limited resources into account. Some resource saving might be achieved by reviewing the need for the production of some statistics so frequently – particularly GDP (both national and regional estimates are produced both monthly and quarterly), population and vital statistics (produced monthly), and energy balances (again, produced monthly).
21. Belstat is involved in some technical assistance projects but could make more use of the EU funded TAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange) Programme to implement consultations in key areas of development such as business statistics, national accounts, and social statistics.
22. The Assessment team recommends that Belstat should:
- R21 Confront the need for high frequency of data such as monthly Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and regional Gross Domestic Product, population and vital statistics in the light of genuine user needs, and planned developments (such as a Time User Survey, and environmental accounts) in the light of impending budget reductions.
  - R22 Establish a cost calculation system for statistical activities within the programme of statistical work in order to have a sound evidence base for budget requests in the future.
  - R23 Consider more flexible approaches to the allocation of tasks, the development of more cross-department / project work and more flexible working time arrangements.
  - R24 Review the distribution of staff among the head-quarters and the territorial bodies, especially in the light of the introduction of electronic data collection and web-based surveys.
  - R25 Review the efficiency of the current arrangements for collecting and editing data at district and regional levels, and develop plans that optimise the use of resources to improve statistical quality.
  - R26 Review the structure and role of regional offices in the light of forthcoming IT developments (including electronic reporting) and forthcoming budget cuts.
  - R27 Review the efficiency of the current arrangements of both regional offices and Belstat producing publications and databases (and the proposal to develop regional office websites).
23. Belstat has a good ‘quality strategy’ reflecting best European practices in this area. It should be implemented step by step, taking account of international best practice and expertise. Particular emphasis should be given to the introduction of quality reports covering the aspects of quality promulgated by the European Statistical System – including quality indicators (timeliness, response burden etc) – for the most important statistical domains.



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24. The Assessment team considers that Belstat should:
- R28 Continue to monitor response burdens in terms of the time spent (by respondents) preparing and submitting forms.
  - R29 Consider the scope for more use of survey sampling in the domain of business statistics.
  - R30 Review international best practice in presenting metadata, introduce a standard approach to the presentation of metadata on the website, and provide links to these metadata from the indicators.
  - R31 Work with Eurostat and UNECE with a view to measuring and reporting the quality of statistics drawn from administrative sources.
  - R32 Introduce quality reports covering the aspects of quality promulgated by the European Statistical System – including quality indicators (timeliness, response burden etc) – for the most important statistical domains.
  - R33 Continue to implement self-assessments and quality audits.
  - R34 Continue to document and streamline statistical production processes (from data collection to publication), and share them across Belstat and the territorial offices.
25. In general, Belstat appears to adhere to the principle of equal access to summary statistical data prepared in accordance with the programme of statistical work. All users have an equal right to receive published statistical information, and summary statistical data are made available to users free of charge. However, the LSS allows Belstat to provide unpublished statistical information to Government prior to its publication. This should be addressed in a revision to the LSS (see *paragraph 9: R14*). A more comprehensive and precise calendar of releases is needed.
26. Belstat's dissemination has a strong focus on meeting the needs of users in government. This would be supported by, for example, the addition of appropriate analytical commentary to the release of all new statistics.
27. A large number of statistical publications are produced, and some innovative approaches such as joint projects with major newspapers on the dissemination of popularised statistics, and the book *Statistics for Schoolchildren*, are noteworthy.
28. Belstat's web-site is currently a little old-fashioned, but there are plans in place to enhance it by including interactive databases. The Assessment team supports this development, which was of interest to users, and would note the need to provide suitable training. Additionally the Assessment team emphasises the need to publish on the website considerably more information about methods and quality, and to make the website the focus for those (in the Republic and abroad) interested in both official statistics about Belarus and the arrangements for the production and publication of the statistics.
29. The Assessment team recommends that Belstat should:
- R35 Publish Belstat's statistical methodologies on the website in English, to encourage international peer review and to enhance transparency.
  - R36 Publish information about the response burden imposed by Belstat's business surveys in terms of time; and publish plans to extend this to cover non-centralised surveys.
  - R37 Publish on the website, via interactive databases, all summary data held by Belstat.

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- R38 Ensure that the links on Belstat's website to other producers of state statistics point directly to their statistics.
- R39 Review the layout of charts, tables and analytical commentary in publications and on the website against international best practice.
- R40 Ensure that databases and statistical releases include time series of data relating to discrete calendar (interval) periods such as months and quarters.
- R41 Provide training to users and potential users when new databases are made available on the website.
- R42 Enhance the pre-release calendar to show both the day and precise time of release, for headline indicators (at least). It should be made more visible on the website; and its accessibility should be enhanced by allowing users to search by topic (as well as by date); and it should include releases to be published in the following three months.
- R43 Take steps to ensure that statistics relating to the Republic of Belarus are published before, or at the same time as, statistics for the regions and districts.
- R44 Add appropriate analytical commentary to the release of new statistics.
- R45 Enhance the capacity and capability of the Press Office.
30. Belstat's relations with the scientific community appear to be effective and supportive; the nature of their collaboration strengthens Belstat's statistical activity.
31. Media users were very positive about Belstat's trustworthiness, and its products and services. They were supportive of Belstat's plans and direction-of-travel.
32. Section 4 of this Report contains many detailed observations about the statistics that Belstat produces. The most important are the need to: (i) change from the production of cumulative to discrete economic statistics (figures referring to distinct calendar periods such as months or quarters, as opposed to accumulated figures including earlier periods: see also R40, above); (ii) substantially redesign business statistics as the number of small enterprises increases and forms of property change – this redesign should address organisational arrangements, data collection and processing, the presentation of statistics, and the use of current international standards and classifications; and (iii) publish results from the LFS.
33. The Assessment team regards its other detailed observations primarily as ongoing strengthening, which merit further work by Belstat. The Assessment team considers that Belstat should:
- R46 Strengthen Belstat's coordination role in developing new versions of classifications, in relation to the introduction of classifications in state statistical activity.
- R47 Improve the coverage of the statistical business register in order for the latter to encompass all economic entities, regardless of their respective legal form, size, and field of activity.
- R48 Implement the IT developments which would enable Belstat to maintain the register at its headquarters and to update it online.
- R49 Move as quickly as possible to the NACE rev. 2 classification of economic activities, to ensure comparability with the statistical information of European countries.
- R50 Publish an analysis of the discrepancy between the 2009 Census population estimate and the 2009 'rolled forward' estimate, and comment on the implications for future 'rolled forward' population estimates.

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- R51 Publish estimates of the main labour market indicators from the LFS.
  - R52 Publish and implement a plan for the coherent presentation and analysis of data from the different sources of labour market data.
  - R53 Play an active role in the newly established standing inter-agency working group on macro-economic statistics.

The Assessment team considers that the Ministry of Finance should:

- R54 Prioritise the implementation of sound GFS according to the 2001 IMF methodology.

The Assessment team considers that Belstat should:

- R55 Implement a change in the production and publication of National Accounts, particularly key indicators such as GDP (including regional GDP), from cumulative estimates to estimates for discrete periods.
- R56 Consult users and in particular the Statistical Council, about a proposal to abolish the compilation of monthly and quarterly regional GDP, and monthly national GDP.
- R57 Use all possible data sources for the estimation of shuttle trade and other non-observed international trade in goods.

The Assessment team considers that the National Bank of the Republic of Belarus should:

- R58 Continue the improvement of balance of payments statistics in accordance with the new requirements of 6<sup>th</sup> version of Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Guidance (IMF, 2009). This work should be coordinated by the newly established standing inter-agency working group on macro-economic statistics.

The Assessment team considers that Belstat should:

- R59 Explain to non-expert users the methodological differences and distinctive purposes of the CPI and the Core CPI. Ideally both indices could be published simultaneously in one press release along with a very short methodological explanation.
- R60 Publish alongside the weekly CPIs a short methodological description of the main conceptual differences and distinctive purposes of the weekly CPI and the monthly CPI.
- R61 Introduce more electronic data reporting and collection.
- R62 Review the list of data and variables collected.
- R63 Embark on a comprehensive transformation project towards a system of structural and short-term business statistics, reflecting this development of the economy in an appropriate way and at a proper timing.
- R64 Participate in World Agricultural Census Programmes in order to improve agricultural statistics; and develop an appropriate strategic plan.
- R65 Review the responsibilities of Belstat and the health and education Ministries with a view to developing a clearer, more efficient system of collecting and processing data; make appropriate legal changes as necessary.
- R66 Explore the feasibility of incorporating the ESSPROS standards into the collection and reporting of social protection statistics.

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## 1. LEGAL BASIS

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

34. The legal basis (generally, and in relation to statistics) in Belarus is hierarchical:
- Laws of the Republic of Belarus
  - Edicts (Decrees) of the President of the Republic of Belarus
  - International treaties
  - Decrees of the Government
  - Legal acts of the National Statistics Committee, and Ministers.
35. The following aspects are considered to be essentials of a statistical law:
1. Guarantee of professional independence for the producers of official statistics;
  2. Adoption of a multi-annual statistical programme by the relevant legislative authorities;
  3. Strong power to collect and access data for statistical purposes;
  4. Firm guarantee of statistical confidentiality;
  5. Impartial dissemination of the statistical information produced.
36. Further important aspects which should also be laid down in the statistical law are the organisation and coordination of the statistical system (including the mandate of the statistical office), as well as the role of the Statistical Council. These aspects will be discussed in later chapters.
37. This Chapter describes the legal basis of Belarus statistics – first, in terms of the relevant legal instruments, and then in terms of the elements outlined above. (In some cases, operational as opposed to legal aspects are discussed in later Chapters). The closing section of this Chapter makes recommendations intended to strengthen the legal basis of Belarus statistics.

### 1.2 LAW ON STATE STATISTICS

38. The Law of the Republic of Belarus ‘On State Statistics’ (LSS) is the primary legislation relating to ‘state statistics’ – a term which appears to have the same meaning as ‘official statistics’.
39. The Law has evolved in recent years, from the 1997 Act (which was based on the UN’s Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics):
- 2004 Act – addition of definitions of key terms; adjustment of issues of international cooperation; expansion of the scope of subjects of legal relations in the field of state statistics; and specification of the rights and obligations of subjects of legal relations in the field of state statistics; specification of such principles of state statistics as scientific validity, relevance, timeliness, confidentiality of primary statistical data as well as professionalism and independence in carrying out state statistical activity.
  - 2008 Act – specification of the range of persons who are administratively liable for the violation of submission and falsification of state statistical reporting data.
  - 2009 Act – change of the status of the republican government authority in the field of state statistics; introduction of a statistical work programme to be approved by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus according to

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which the bodies of state statistics carry out their activities; updating the principles of official statistics in compliance with the European Statistics Code of Practice; addition of the principle of rationality; specification of selected powers of state statistics bodies.

40. The LSS has six sections:

1. General provisions – terminology, tasks, principles, international co-operation; Interagency Council on State Statistics.
2. Subjects of legal relations in the field of state statistics – the rights and obligations of: state statistical bodies, authorised state organisations, and respondents.
3. Implementation of the state statistical activity – statistical programming, financial provisions, and state statistical observations (state statistical reporting, inquiry forms, questionnaires, Census questionnaires).
4. Submission, dissemination and use of statistical data – including compiling and keeping a statistical register.
5. Liability for violation of the statistical legislation.
6. Final provisions.

41. The key structural features of the LSS are as follows:

- State statistical bodies – responsible for the collection of data from respondents; approval of statistical tools to be used by ‘authorised’ organisations such as Ministries; verification of primary statistical data; receipt of data from administrative sources; and the dissemination of summary statistical data (information).
- State organisations authorised to maintain statistics – responsible for the collection of data from respondents which are subordinated to them (under their supervision), and also on matters that fall within their jurisdiction (specific issues); verification of primary statistical data; and the dissemination of summary statistical data (information). The National Bank of the Republic of Belarus is an authorised body.
- The Inter Agency Council – which operates in an advisory capacity on behalf of selected users of state statistics.
- Respondents – who have both rights (to receive, on a free-of-charge basis, blank forms of state statistical surveys and instructions for their completion; to receive primary statistical data as related to the respondent; and to receive and use summary statistics in the manner prescribed by the legislation of the Republic of Belarus); and obligations ( to submit, on a free-of-charge basis, primary statistical data for the purposes of state statistical surveys; to submit reliable primary statistical data under the signature of the responsible person in the volume and by the deadlines fixed in legislative acts; and to carry out the decisions of state statistical bodies and authorised state organisations taken within their competence).

42. *Chapter 2* describes these stakeholder groups (in the context of the National Statistical System) in more detail.

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### 1.3 OTHER LEGISLATION AFFECTING STATE STATISTICS

#### 1.3.1 *Statute of the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus (2008)*

43. This Statute – a Decree of the President – establishes the NSC (referred to as Belstat). The key features of the Statute are as follows:
- The ‘system’ of Belstat – the central office, territorial bodies of state statistics, and subordinate organisations.
  - The structure of Belstat – Main Departments and Departments; the Chairman, First Deputy and (three) Deputies; and a Collegium (senior managers of the Belstat system).
  - Key features of the role of the Chairman – who is appointed (and may be ‘relieved of office’) by the President; is a member of the Council of Ministers; recommends to the President the appointment/dismissal of the Deputies; and appoints (and dismisses) Heads of territorial bodies and subordinate organisations.
  - The tasks, rights and responsibilities of Belstat – these appear to be consistent with the relevant provisions of the LSS.
44. Some of the suggested areas for strengthening the LSS – see below – may be relevant to the Statute. And some of the suggested changes to the LSS may require complementary changes to the Statute.

#### 1.3.2 *Census legislation*

45. The legal basis of the most recent (2009) population census, and some key aspects of the census, are described at *Section 4.3* below.
46. The Census Law has the following structure:
- General provisions.
  - Subjects of the Census – rights and obligations.
  - Preparation and implementation of the Census.
  - Protection, storage of personal data and dissemination of final census data.
  - Final provisions.
47. From the Assessment team’s perspective, the most noteworthy aspect of the Census law is that *Article 24* (‘personal data... shall be used exclusively for the compilation of the final results’) precludes the linkage of Census data with any other source of data – and hence it does not seem possible to link data from successive Censuses, or to use Census data as the ‘spine’ of a social statistics system.

#### 1.3.3 *Rules of professional ethics of government employees of state statistics bodies*

48. This 2010 Approved Order of the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus sets out a code of norms for employees of the Belstat system. It covers the following issues:
- Principles of professional activity of civil servants.

- Relationships of civil servants with individuals, respondents, users, workers of state agencies and organisations.
- Relations of civil servants with colleagues//subordinated persons.
- Duty to improve professional and educational level of civil servants.
- Requirements for the appearance of civil servants.
- Rules of conduct for civil servants in their out-of-office time.
- Obligation of civil servants not to disclose confidential information.
- Prohibitions and restrictions for civil servants related to work in state statistics bodies.
- Responsibility and performance evaluation of civil servants.

#### **1.3.4 Law on Mass Media**

49. The Law of the Republic of Belarus ‘On Mass Media’ (No. 427-3, June 17 2008) has the following provisions of relevance to Belstat.
- *Article 34* ensures that in connection with professional responsibilities, a mass media journalist has the right to collect, request and receive information from government bodies, and to store and disseminate information required for carrying out his/her professional activity.
  - *Article 36* specifies that government bodies can provide information about their activities to mass media by conducting press conferences, mailing out reference and statistical materials, and by other means.
  - *Article 42* provides a right of response: ‘... state bodies ... to which the mass media has disseminated data infringing on their rights and legal interests, have the right to disseminate their response in the same medium’. This is reflected in *Article 9* of the LSS and *Article 9.5* of the Belarus Statute.
50. The Assessment team was told that media reporting of incorrect price indices and wage statistics was responded to in 2012, and that the correct figures were reported by the media.

### **1.4 PROTECTION OF PROFESSIONAL INDEPENDENCE**

51. According to the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, as well as the European Statistics Code of Practice, the producers of official statistics should be professionally independent. The production of statistics should be independent of policy makers (though influenced by their information needs) and decided solely on the basis of professional considerations – on issues such as the choice of standards and methods, and the format, content and timing of statistical releases. Statistical laws should contain sufficient safeguards against all such possible interventions. Professionalism and independence are the fundamental principles for the credibility of a statistical system, and credibility is of the highest importance.
52. One important element of the perceived professional independence of an NSI relates to the nature of the appointment/dismissal procedures of the head of the NSI. The Statute of the National Statistical Committee (see above) clarifies the appointment/dismissal procedures of the Chairman of Belstat – that appointment and dismissal are the prerogative of the President of the Republic of Belarus.

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### 53. *Assessment*

*This issue – the professional independence of the Chairman of Belstat – seems sufficiently important that it be addressed in the overarching LSS. Moreover, the arrangements described in the Statute fall well short of the requirements of the ESCOP and international best practice more widely (which emphasise the need for open competition and published reasons for dismissal, and the period of tenure).*

*A stronger legal emphasis on Professional Independence would be supported by clarifying – perhaps in the Belstat Statute – that the Chairman has full managerial autonomy, including in relation to the allocation of resources.*

*Belstat’s Statute confirms that the Chairman is a member of the Council of Ministers. The Assessment team was told that this allows the Chairman to ensure that decision making takes appropriate account of statistics, and to understand new information needs. Whilst the team fully accept this, it can also see that others’ perceptions may be more critical – they may see membership of the Council as an opportunity for Ministers to influence the Chairman inappropriately.*

*The Assessment team was told that the Chairman of Belstat has been in post for more than 14 years – meaning that he has remained in office during changes in the Government.*

*These issues of perception are critically important – the AGA Experts are well aware that even a strong statistical reputation can be rapidly and all-too-easily diminished on the basis of perceptions.*

## 1.5 WORK PROGRAMME

54. A national law on statistics should ensure that a multi-annual statistical programme be drawn up. The role of such a programme is to describe the scope of statistical activities over the next 4 or 5 years, setting clear priorities as to what activities will be carried out. The programme should be adopted by the relevant legislative state authorities because determination of what is statistically relevant in the country is a political decision. The details for the implementation of the programme can be decided at a lower level, e.g. by the Statistical Council or even by the head of the statistical office after consultation with advisory bodies. Ideally, the programme should include an estimate of the budget needed for its implementation.
55. The Law on State Statistics, *Section 3, Article 14*, states that:
1. The activity of state statistics bodies shall be performed on the basis of the programme of statistical work to be approved by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus.
  2. Decision on the introduction of amendments and / or additions to the programme of statistical work shall be taken by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus as proposed by the Republican government authority in the field of state statistics.
  3. The programme of statistical work shall be developed by the Republican government authority in the field of state statistics on the basis of rational choice of sources to obtain primary statistical data for the purpose of compilation of summary statistical data (information) to ensure their completeness and reliability, scientific validity and objectivity, relevance and timeliness of provision, taking account of user interests, and to reduce the respondent burden.



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## 56. Assessment

*Belstat operates a comprehensive short and medium term planning system, which covers all producers of state statistics, as well as all regional levels. However, it is rather input oriented. It could usefully clarify the relationship between detailed plans and longer-term strategies – and set these plans and strategies explicitly in the context of users’ needs – as well as including information about the available resources and the costs of implementing different parts of the plans. In addition it would be helpful to publish reports setting out the extent to which plans were realised. The Assessment team endorses Belstat’s plans to implement an automated planning and control system.*

## 1.6 MANDATE FOR DATA COLLECTION

57. Statistical laws should provide producers of official statistics with the right to decide the most appropriate way to acquire the necessary basic information for the compilation of their statistics from all data sources. Public organisations should be obliged to give access to administrative data for statistical purposes, and statistical units to provide the information needed.
58. The mandate for data collection is given in the Law ‘On State Statistics’ – *Article 9, Paragraph 1*: The state statistics bodies shall have the right to:
- receive from respondents on a free-of-charge basis, in the manner prescribed by the Republican government authority in the field of state statistics, primary statistical data in the volume and by the deadlines specified in the state statistical observation forms (1.2);
  - provide respondents with the mandatory instructions on how to eliminate the detected distortions in the state statistical reporting data, and make the corresponding changes to summary statistical data (information) (1.4);
  - receive, in the manner prescribed by the legislation of the Republic of Belarus, the information from the Single State Register of Legal Entities and Individual Entrepreneurs, other registers (records) and databases that are maintained by the government agencies and other state organisations (1.7);
  - receive from government agencies and other organisations the information required for the organisation and conducting of state statistical observations and compilation of summary statistical data (information) (1.9).
59. The mandate for data collection applies both to businesses and households, and the Law also gives access to administrative data in registers (records) and databases that are maintained by government bodies and other state organisations.

## 60. Assessment

*There is a clear statutory mandate for data collection.*

*Penalties in the form of fines can only be given to businesses (legal entities and individual entrepreneurs). However, this possibility is described in the Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Belarus, Article 23.18, rather than in the Law on State Statistics. The LSS might usefully include the right to sanction businesses.*

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## 1.7 STATISTICAL CONFIDENTIALITY

61. Statistical confidentiality is one of the most important principles of official statistics. In order to safeguard the trust of respondents, data must not be used in individual form and in a context where decisions about individuals are taken. A possible exception is the use of such data for scientific purposes, but such use should be under very strict and restrictive conditions. A law on statistics should ensure that confidentiality is protected at all stages of the statistical production process.
62. Confidentiality of primary statistical data is one of the main principles of state statistics, anchored in the Law ‘On State Statistics’ (*Article 5, paragraph 6*). State statistics bodies are required to ensure the confidentiality of primary statistical data and their use for the purposes of state statistics (*Article 9, paragraph 2.9*). In addition, the legislation provides for special safeguards for the protection of primary statistical data containing state secrets, commercial, personal, or other secrets protected by the laws of the Republic of Belarus (*Article 18, paragraph 5*). Also authorised state organisations shall ensure the confidentiality of primary statistical data.
63. The confidentiality of primary statistical data is further underlined in *Article 18* of the Law. Dissemination of such data is only permitted upon the written consent of the respondent who submitted these data.
64. Contracts with public servants of state statistics bodies (ie, employment contracts), oblige employees not to disclose information obtained as a result of their official duties and which is related to the private life, honour, and dignity of citizens, and not require them present such information, except in cases stipulated by legislative acts.
65. A deliberate violation of confidentiality of primary statistical data by an employee of state statistics bodies shall impose on him a disciplinary, administrative, criminal or other responsibility under the law, depending on the gravity of the offence (*Article 21* of the Law ‘On State Statistics’).
66. The national law specifies exceptional cases in which state statistics bodies are required to provide information at the request of law enforcement and judicial bodies on the basis of the Criminal Procedure Code of the Republic of Belarus and the Procedural-Executive Code of Administrative Offences of the Republic of Belarus. Data can be released after a decision of a court, if this is the only way to obtain necessary evidence in a criminal case. The Assessment team was told that, in practice, this never happens.

### 67. Assessment

*Confidentiality of primary statistical data is one of the main principles of state statistics, emphasised in several paragraphs in the Law ‘On State Statistics’. According to Article 18, paragraph 2 of the Law ‘On State Statistics’, depersonalised primary statistical data (ie, that do not allow the identification of individual respondents) may be disseminated. This also applies to microdata of the population census for research purposes. Except for these data, it is not clear whether researchers and others (such as international organisations) have specific rights to receive microdata, or the procedures to ensure confidentiality in connection with this. The demand for this is not large at present, but Belstat should be prepared for an increasing demand in this area. In particular, the Assessment*

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*team understands that no business microdata are disseminated. The LSS could usefully address this directly. It could also be extended to cover the need to supply to eligible researchers statistical data that are disclosive – supporting interest expressed to the assessment team by users of Belstat’s statistics. Such an extension should address, in particular, the ‘eligibility criteria’ and the need for Belstat to maintain a published list of ‘eligible researchers’. This would help to maximise the value of Belstat’s statistical data holdings. There would be merit in Belstat publishing a strategy for enhancing access to microdata, including criteria for access, procedures to ensure confidentiality; it would also be helpful if Belstat were to publish a list of eligible institutions.*

*Whilst the LSS requires state statistical bodies to ensure the confidentiality of primary statistical data, this might be usefully to explicitly include former staff of state statistical bodies.*

*There are no formal procedures for the disclosure control of tables. Tables with few observations within each cell might increase the risk of the identification of individuals. This is probably not a big problem in tables in written publications (or electronic publications in pdf format), but will certainly be a challenge in electronic tables that might be linked, and in online databases that are planned (see Section 3.4). There would be merit in applying automatic statistical disclosure control procedures to tables, and introducing appropriate Statistical Disclosure Control software in the light of the forthcoming introduction of statistical databases.*

## **1.8 IMPARTIAL DISSEMINATION**

68. According to the Fundamental Principles and to the European Statistics Code of Practice, dissemination is to be made on an impartial basis to honour citizens’ rights to public information. Statistical offices have the responsibility to ensure that statistical results are made public. The pre-announcement of statistical releases is a useful tool to support technical autonomy in dissemination.

### **69. Assessment**

*There is no legal provision ensuring equality of access to state statistics. Whilst the Assessment team was told that neither the President nor government ministers receive pre-release access to state statistics – once they are in a form ready for publication – there appears to be no legal defence should such a request be made, either during the production of the statistics or the subsequent preparation of statistical releases.*

*Other relevant considerations – such as fixed release times, and a longer pre-announced timetable of statistical releases – are covered in Section 3.4 below.*

## **1.9 COORDINATION**

70. Countries with decentralised statistical systems need to take steps to ensure the effective coordination of all the producers of official statistics. The National Statistical Institute (NSI) – Belstat, in this case – should be given the leading role as the coordinator of the system and should provide appropriate methodological assistance; other producers should use the same standards, methods and

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classifications as the NSI, and their work programmes should be included in the programme of the overall statistical programme, to avoid duplication and to support transparency. They should also provide their results to the NSI, for further dissemination. Ideally these coordination arrangements are established in law, to help avoid disagreements about respective organisations' responsibilities.

71. A particular strength of the LSS is that it requires Belstat to co-ordinate the state statistical system in a number of important respects:

- Belstat 'shall exercise regulation, administration and co-ordination of the activities of other government organisations in [the field of state statistics] (*Article 8*).
- Belstat is responsible for technical aspects of decentralised state statistical observations – the development of draft forms of and instructions for their completion; and the provision of relevant methodological guidance. The provision to respondents of blank forms, and the collection and processing of primary data through decentralised state statistical surveys, are the responsibilities of authorised state organisations.

## 72. *Assessment*

*Whilst the relevant organisations (ie, those which Belstat coordinates) are described in general terms (such as 'authorised state organisations'), it is not clear which these organisations are, without recourse to strategy and planning documents. It would strengthen transparency if the LSS (or secondary legislation) explained clearly which organisations produce state statistics, and defined criteria for these other producers of state statistics, including that their statistical activities are governed by the statistical law and follow the ESCOP. Equally, the legal basis of these other producers of state statistics should explicitly refer to their statistical activities.*

*One notable omission in Belstat's statutory co-ordination role relates to statistical classifications: the approval of such classifications is the responsibility of the State Committee on Standards. To comply fully with the ESCOP, decisions about classifications (as with decisions about statistical methods, and standards) should be the formal responsibility of the national statistical institute – in this case, Belstat. The Assessment team was told that in practice the arrangements worked satisfactorily – indeed, the Committee on Standards had supported Belstat's views about level 4 of NACE Rev. 2. Accordingly the Assessment team is content not to make a formal recommendation in this area.*

## 1.10 STATISTICAL COUNCIL

73. The core task of such a Council is to discuss and formulate a consolidated opinion from a large range of users on the draft annual and multi-year statistical programmes before they are submitted to the government for final approval. In that respect, the Statistical Council must carefully balance the needs for additional statistical information and the burden of respondents. The Statistical Council should also be regularly informed of the achievements under the current programmes and of any issues related to their implementation. Another possible task of the Statistical Council is to advise on strategic issues concerning the National Statistical System, including the assessment of the compliance of all members of the system with the LSS, the UN Fundamental Principles and the ESCOP.

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74. Therefore, the composition of the Statistical Council should strike a balance between government/public sector users, and user' communities outside the administration – including representatives of the media, academia and the private business community. Ideally, government users should represent ministries and agencies that have a broad range of information needs. Since the Statistical Council is not a methodological committee, other producers of statistics (organisational units of ministries and agencies producing statistics) do not necessarily have to be members of the Council.
75. As described in *Section 2.1*, in the National Statistical System (state statistics) of Belarus the advisory body most closely corresponding to the Statistical Council is the Interagency Council on State Statistics instituted by *Article 6.1* of the LSS. The Interagency Council on State Statistics (hereafter the Inter-agency Council or the Council) is an advisory body, whose status and composition are proposed by Belstat and approved by the Council of Ministers. The LSS also mentions that Belstat should provide the secretariat of the Council. The Resolution of the Council of Ministers established the tasks, rights and composition of the Inter-agency Council in Resolution No. 647 of 2003.
76. According to the resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus No. 647 of 16 May 2003, the main tasks of the Council are: to review the progress of work on the revision of forms of state statistical reporting in order to unify, simplify and optimise them; to reduce the burden on respondents of state statistical surveys; to review justified proposals on conducting new state statistical surveys; and to agree upon the introduction of new forms of state statistical surveys and forms of departmental reporting.
77. Beside its main tasks, the Council has the right to reflect on the draft Programme for the improvement of state statistics in a long-term perspective, programme of statistical work for the forthcoming year, etc.
78. According to the amended Resolution of the Council of Ministers No 90 of 2012, the chairman of the Inter-agency Council is the Deputy Prime-Minister of the Republic of Belarus and the Deputy Chairman of the Interagency Council is the Chairman of Belstat. Of the other 15 members of the Committee, the large majority represent ministries and state agencies. A smaller number of members represent the academic and research community, and entrepreneurs. There are no representatives of the media or trade unions.
79. Meetings of the Council are held as needed, but at least twice a year; they should be attended by at least 2/3 of its members to take decisions. Decisions are taken by simple majority vote and in case of equal ballot the vote of the chairman of the Council is conclusive. Members of the board may not nominate alternates.

## **80. Assessment**

*Unusually, based on the Resolution, the Council may consider issues of methodology related to data collection, processing and dissemination. It is obviously an asset for the System to have such a strong coordination body of statistical activities but the tasks and rights of the Inter-agency Council, as the advisory body representing the users, should not interfere with the professional independence of statistical producers. It is clear from the ESCOP that the choice of the primary data and the way that the data are collected and processed is the (independent) professional responsibility of producers of official statistics. The main tasks of the Inter-agency*

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*Council should be more oriented towards the output – and therefore focused on the relevance, timeliness and punctuality, comparability and accessibility of statistical information. In that respect, the Council should not only have the right but the obligation to be consulted about the preparation and the follow-up of the implementation of the multi-year and annual programmes of statistical work, provided that these tools are output oriented.*

*Decisions are brought to the attention of the Council of Ministers, and therefore it seems that the Inter-agency Council is formally an advisory body to the Government rather than to either the National Statistical Committee (Belstat) or to the National Statistical System.*

*The Assessment team accepts that the Interagency Council is a useful element of the statistical architecture in Belarus. But it does not serve the main purpose of a statistical council, and is dominated by government. It would be appropriate either to develop the role and membership of the Interagency Council, or to establish a new Council which brought together a wider range of users.*

### **1.11 ISSUES THAT MAY BE CONSIDERED FOR A FUTURE REVISION OF THE LAW**

81. The legal system of the Republic of Belarus describes the roles and responsibilities of the various agencies involved in the production and dissemination of state statistics. The system appears to be flexible and responsive; changes stimulated by external developments have been made to the LSS in recent years.
82. However, in a number of important respects the existing legal framework requires updating to reflect the provisions of the ESCOP and to reflect technological developments. *Article 5* of the LSS establishes the ‘main principles of state statistics’: professional independence; rationality in choosing the modes to collect primary statistical data; scientific validity, reliability and objectivity of statistical data; relevance and timeliness of statistical data; confidentiality of primary statistical data; comparability of statistical data; and accessibility and openness of summary statistical data. Whilst there is a substantial overlap with the principles of the ESCOP, there are a number of specific elements of ESCOP which are not apparent or fully articulated in the LSS. And some institutional strengthening of the state statistical system is required, and itself requires some legal change.
83. Accordingly, the Assessment team recommends that Belstat should:
  - R1 Clarify the delineation of the NSS in the statistical law.
  - R2 Define criteria for other producers of state statistics, and clarify that their statistical activities are governed by the statistical law and follow the ESCOP, and ensure that the legal basis of these other producers of state statistics explicitly refer to their statistical activities.
  - R3 Review the responsibilities of Belstat and the appropriate Ministries with a view to developing a clearer, more efficient system of collecting and processing data; make appropriate legal changes as necessary.
  - R4 Describe the principle of ‘Professional Independence’ in the Statistical Law – including the mandate and appointment procedures for the Chair (instead of spreading it over other legal acts).
  - R5 Ensure that the statistical law gives the Chairman of Belstat full managerial autonomy, including for the allocation of resources.

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- R6 Review the feasibility and desirability of linking Census data with other data; if appropriate, make the necessary changes to the legislation for the next Census.
- R7 Reinforce and make more explicit the co-ordination role of Belstat in the statistical law.
- R8 Strengthen the emphasis on ‘meeting user needs’ in the Statistical Law; in doing so, consider replacing the term ‘state statistics’ by ‘official statistics’.
- R9 Strengthen the emphasis on ‘quality’ (in the design, production and reporting on state statistics) in the Statistical Law.
- R10 Ensure that the statistical law enables the production and provision of microdata relating to individuals, households and businesses.
- R11 Amend the legal confidentiality protection to explicitly include former staff of Belstat.
- R12 Give the Interagency Council responsibility for (a) approving the list of producers of official statistics; and (b) approving the incorporation of their statistical activities into the programme of work.
- R13 Ensure that the composition of the Interagency Council, and its remit, are a function of the Chairman of Belstat (rather than being determined by the Council of Ministers). As part of this, either extend the membership to include a wider range of users, or establish a new Statistical Council with such a membership.
- R14 Ensure that statistical information – including that from new surveys – must, in law, be published as soon as it is available, with no prior access to the Government.
84. To complement these formal recommendations, the Assessment team thinks that it would be helpful for:
1. Belstat to publish an accessible ‘Guide to the legal basis of statistics in the Republic of Belarus’.
  2. The Chairman of Belstat to publish a suitably summary note describing his engagement with the Council of Ministers.
  3. The LSS to include specific reference to ‘quality’ – whilst the ‘main principles of state statistics’ in the LSS address various aspects of quality, the term ‘quality’ is not used in the LSS. It would send an appropriate signal to users of state statistics if producers were legally bound to consider quality issues in the design and production of state statistics, and to report on quality alongside the publication of the statistics.
85. Further observations are provided in the ‘assessment’ part of *Section 2.1*, below.

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## 2. NATIONAL SYSTEM OF STATE STATISTICS

### 2.1 STRUCTURE OF THE NATIONAL SYSTEM OF STATE STATISTICS

86. A National System of Official Statistics (NSS) can be defined as the set of public organisations and units within a country that collect, process and disseminate statistics in full compliance with the provisions of a national law on official statistics as well as with the Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics and the ESCOP. Advisory bodies, such as a Statistical Council, are also part of the National Statistical system.
87. With the exception of the main producer of official statistics in the country, it is a common practice not to mention explicitly in the statistical law the other producers of official statistics. Other bodies that comply with the law, including their respective responsibilities and tasks as producers of official statistics, are better listed in the statistical programme. It is in general the responsibility of the main producer of official statistics in the country to assess whether other producers of statistics are qualified to become part the National Statistical System.
88. It is important to mention that only specific organisational units producing official statistics would belong to the National Statistical System and not the overall ministry or agency that these units are administratively attached to. Ideally, laws, codes and other jurisdictions pertaining to other producers of official statistics should explicitly make a reference to the LSS.
89. The term ‘state statistics’, as defined in *Article 1* of the Law of the Republic of Belarus on State Statistics (LSS,) is reasonably consistent with the notion of National Statistical System as mentioned above. However, this definition is based on a functional rather than an institutional approach and therefore does not provide a clear boundary of the System. To some extent, this is also the case for what could be considered as the mission statement of the State Statistics. Indeed, *Article 4* of the LSS describes major activities pertaining to state statistics but omit to mention what is considered as the main mission of official statistics: the production and dissemination of statistical information that meets users’ requirements (over and above those of the producer of statistics itself).
90. Nevertheless, the institutional constituents of the system can be derived from the LSS and are as follows:
  - a. The state statistics bodies that (according to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 445 from 2008 on the Statute of the National Statistical Committee (SNSC) of the Republic of Belarus) consists of the National Statistical Committee and its territorial and functional subordinated organisations. *Chapter 3* of this report describes and assesses in more detail the organisation and main functions of the National Statistical Committee (Belstat) but at this stage, it is important to mention that Belstat is de-jure and de-facto the main producer of official statistics and the coordinator of state statistics. The national statistical programming and coordination mechanisms are further described in *Chapter 2.3* of this report.
  - b. The authorised state organisations or in other words government agencies, excluding the state statistics bodies, participating in state statistical activities as defined in *Article 1* of the LSS.



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- c. The Interagency Council on State Statistics (Statistical Council), the advisory body for the coordination of state statistics and related activities (*Article 6.1* of the LSS).
91. Before describing in more detail the organisation and function of the authorised state organisations and the Statistical Council, it is important to mention that the state statistics of the Republic of Belarus is, from an institutional perspective, quite centralised – about 80% of the production of official statistics is the responsibility of Belstat. On the other hand, the system is strongly devolved geographically. This reflects the three-layered administrative division of the country (Republic or centre; regions; and districts), as well as a traditional approach to data collection which is mainly through exhaustive statistical reporting systems that need to be processed (data entry) and controlled at district and regional levels.
92. Authorised state organisations vs. data providers
93. The main issue in defining the boundary of a system of official statistics is about which government agencies, or (in most cases) which organisational unit(s) of these agencies, can be considered as (other) producers of official statistics.
94. Belstat has identified the following national authorities and agencies as other producers of official statistics, defined in the LSS as authorised state organisations:
1. Ministry of Architecture and Construction
  2. Ministry of Housing and Utilities
  3. Ministry of Health
  4. Ministry of Culture
  5. Ministry of Forestry
  6. Ministry of Education
  7. Ministry for Emergency Situations
  8. Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection
  9. Ministry of Communications and Information
  10. Ministry of Agriculture and Food
  11. Ministry of Sport and Tourism
  12. Ministry of Trade
  13. Ministry of Transport and Communications
  14. Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
  15. Ministry of Finance
  16. Ministry of Economy
  17. Ministry of Justice
  18. State Committee on Property
  19. State Committee on Science and Technology
  20. State Committee on Standards
  21. State Border Committee
  22. Concern ‘Belgospisheprom’ (Belarus state food company)
  23. National Bank of the Republic of Belarus
  24. Republican Centre for Health Improvement and Sanatorium and Resort Treatment
95. To some extent, this list of authorised state organisations (other producers of official statistics) overlaps with the list of ministries and agencies provided in

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*Chapter 2.2* under providers of administrative data. It is therefore not straightforward to distinguish which activities from these organisations fall under the scope of official statistics, as defined in the LSS, and which ones relate to their role as providers of administrative data.

96. Providers of administrative data collect and process statistical information first of all for their own needs and according to their own legislation; mainly for managing their administrative processes, and for reporting on their operations to higher authorities that monitor and control their activities (e.g. government, the President and Parliament). In some cases, aggregated information is also published, but this does not qualify producers of these aggregates as ‘other producers of official statistics’. In order to be considered as official statistics, information has to be collected, processed, and disseminated under the strict compliance with the LSS, and relevant UN and EU official statistics principles. Another difference between producers of official statistics and providers of administrative data is that official statistics have to be compiled according to internationally agreed principles, methodology and standards, including that access to the final product must be granted to all users simultaneously.
97. Furthermore, unit level data can be exchanged between producers of official statistics (for statistical purposes only), but with administrative data providers, the single flow principle applies. This means that producers of official statistics can have access to administrative unit level information but that confidential data held by producers of official statistics should not be made available to administrative data providers.
98. According to *Article 1* of the LSS, authorised state organisations belong to the National Statistical System (state statistics). The same article of the LSS mentions that authorised state organisations are government agencies participating in state statistics activities. *Articles 4* and *5*, respectively on the main tasks and main principles not only apply to Belstat but also to the authorised state organisations since they explicitly cover the overall National Statistical System. It means that statistical activities carried out by these organisations should follow the principles of professional independence, confidentiality and accessibility. However, the LSS does not require ministries and agencies to create a specific organisational unit for their statistical activities. Therefore, there is a risk that ‘non-statistical’ departments of these ministries and agencies might consider themselves as authorised state organisations and in good faith interfere with state statistical activities or even gain access to confidential information. This cautionary note does not apply to organisations whose statistical activities do not fall under the scope of the LSS (e.g. providers of administrative data) since they would not be considered as authorised state organisations.
99. *Article 11* of the LSS on rights and obligations of the authorised state organisations mirrors to some extent the rights and responsibilities of state statistics bodies (Belstat) as provided in *Article 9*. It is important to mention that according to the LSS these organisations are exclusively involved in decentralised state statistical observations, in contrast to the centralised state statistical observations carried out by Belstat. A strong element of coordination of the National Statistical System is provided in *Article 3* that declares that decentralised state statistical observations must be systematically approved by Belstat. This is a practice that allows the National Statistical System to keep or even reduce the burden on respondents to that which is strictly necessary for the production of official statistics.

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100. However, *Article 11* of the LSS does not mention the right or even the obligation for authorised state organisations to disseminate statistical information, or the possibility of these bodies collecting data through other means than statistical observations (e.g. administrative data). It also looks as though some other producers of official statistics are out of the scope of the LSS – for example, the National Bank of the Republic of Belarus (NBRB) and the Ministry of Finance. The latter compiles the Government Finance Statistics – which according to international standards is definitely official statistics – based on its own administrative information (state budget); publishes the figures on its website; and transfers them directly to international organisations. To some extent this reservation also applies to the NBRB which produces the Balance of Payments and banking statistics. On the other hand, the State Border Committee (Customs office), which provides administrative data to Belstat for the compilation of the External Trade Statistics, is considered to be a producer of official statistics (authorised state organisation).
101. There are two other commonly used criteria that qualify a producer of official statistics and that are omitted from the LSS:
- a. *Paragraph 1 of Article 13* (LSS) mentions that state statistics (National Statistical System) are maintained by Belstat and authorised state organisations in conformity with their [own] jurisdiction. For Belstat, it is clear that this refers to the LSS, but for other producers of official statistics no reference is made to this law. This might explain why the Law on the NBRB and regulations from the Ministry of Finance related to their statistical activities do not make a reference to the LSS.
  - b. It is also a common practice to list the activities and outputs of all producers of official statistics in the annual statistical programme. However, *Article 14* of the LSS, on the programme of statistical work, mentions that the latter encompasses all activities of the state statistical bodies – but no reference is made to the other producers of official statistics (authorised state organisations). This also restricts the competence of the Statistical Council to coordinate and approve deliveries of the overall National Statistical System since other producers of official statistics are not mentioned in the programme of statistical work.
102. Another issue in defining the boundary of a system of official statistics and the right for all producers of official statistics to have access to administrative data and information from public registers, is that *Article 9* of the LSS grants this privilege to state statistics bodies (Belstat, including territorial bodies) exclusively – omitting to mention other producers of official statistics (authorised state organisations).

## 2.2 INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON STATE STATISTICS

103. State statistics is not only composed of producers of official statistics (Belstat and authorised state organisations); the Interagency Council on State Statistics (as described in *Article 6.1* of the LSS) should also be considered a key player in the National Statistical System. The existence of a Statistical Council which represents a wide range of stakeholders and allows them to interact is a prerequisite for the production of statistical information that meet users' requirements.

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104. *Section 1.10* provides more information about the Interagency Council, both from a legal perspective and in terms of its remit and membership.
105. Particularly relevant, in the current context, is the fact that the main tasks of the Inter-agency Council should be more oriented towards statistical outputs – and therefore focus on the relevance, timeliness and punctuality, comparability and accessibility of statistical information. The composition of the Council should be extended to other users outside the sphere of the government. The Council is not a methodological committee and therefore other producers of statistics (organisational units of ministries and agencies producing statistics) should not be full members of this advisory body – though they should be invited to participate when necessary. As an alternative, the Interagency Council could be retained in its current form, with a view to focusing on the needs of government users, but a new Council might be established to allow Belstat to engage systematically with a wider range of users.

### **106. Assessment**

*The boundary of the national system of official statistics (state statistics) is not clearly defined in the LSS since the latter does not specify under which conditions and procedures a producer of statistics can be qualified as a member of the system (producer of official statistics). In that respect, the following detailed observations may prove helpful to Belstat:*

- a. In the LSS, revise Article 1 to better define the scope of the National Statistical System (state statistics) from an institutional point of view;*
- b. Mention in paragraph 1 of Article 13 of the LSS that only those organisations or structural units of organisations producing statistics in full compliance with the provisions of the LSS and the relevant international principles (UNFPOS and ESCOP) are qualified to be member of the System;*
- c. Add in Article 4 of the LSS the main task of producer of official statistics (mission statement) which is to produce and disseminate statistical information that meets users' requirements, other than the needs of the producer of statistics itself;*
- d. Add all statistical activities of official producers of statistics in the annual programme of statistical work; and*
- e. Add a paragraph in Article 14 mentioning that only organisations or structural units of organisations assessed by Belstat as compliant with the LSS and the relevant international principles should be incorporated into the programme, not as providers of information but as producers of official statistics. In that respect, in paragraph 1 of this article, state statistical bodies should be replaced by state statistics.*

## **2.3 DATA PROVIDERS**

107. Belstat uses data from (voluntary) household surveys, (compulsory) business surveys, and administrative sources. Belstat's own surveys are referred to as 'centralised state statistical observations'; Ministries collect information using 'decentralised state statistical observations'. In order to reduce the burden on respondents as foreseen in the present 'Strategy for the Development of State Statistics of the Republic of Belarus' (*Chapter 5, Expected outcome*), Belstat is

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- actively working to replace the collection of primary information from traditional state statistical observations by administrative data and sample surveys.
108. According to the ‘Law on State Statistics’, state statistical bodies (that is, Belstat and its territorial bodies) have the right to:
- receive, in the manner prescribed by the legislation of the Republic of Belarus, the information from the Single State Register of Legal Entities and Individual Entrepreneurs, other registers (records) and databases that are maintained by the government agencies and other state organisations (*Article 9, s1.7*);
  - receive from government agencies and other organisations the information required for the organisation and conducting of state statistical observations and compilation of summary statistical data (information) (*Article 9, s1.9*).
109. These rights are re-affirmed in the ‘Statute of the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus’.
110. Data transfers, often at aggregated level, between holders of administrative information and Belstat are governed by ad hoc agreements between the parties. Such agreements have been concluded with the following ministries and agencies:
1. State Control Committee
  2. Ministry of Health
  3. State Property Committee
  4. Ministry on Taxes and Duties
  5. Ministry of Trade
  6. National Bank
  7. Ministry of Finance
  8. Ministry of Culture
  9. Ministry of Economy
  10. Ministry of Internal Affairs
  11. Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
  12. Ministry of Justice
  13. Ministry of Transport and Communications
  14. Ministry of Foreign Affairs
  15. Ministry of Communications and Information
  16. State Committee for Science and Technologies
  17. Ministry of Education
  18. Higher Attestation Commission
  19. Ministry of Forestry
  20. Ministry of Agriculture and Food
  21. Ministry of Housing and Utilities
  22. Ministry of Energy
  23. Ministry of Construction and Architecture
111. The Agreements contain a list of the required data, and the format, frequency and timing of its supply to Belstat. The Agreements are not published.
112. Belstat uses administrative data in the following sets of statistics: National Accounts; financial statistics; foreign trade; agricultural statistics; environmental statistics; labour statistics; statistics on living standards; population statistics; educational statistics; culture statistics; tourism and transport statistics.

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113. The Assessment team was told that Belstat is able to influence the composition, form or content of administrative data in order to enhance their statistical potential.

**114. Assessment**

*Belstat has the statutory right of access to administrative data from many different Ministries and agencies. In practice, nevertheless, there are few cases where the data coverage, disaggregation and/or format do not correspond to Belstat's requirements. Furthermore, information about the quality (coverage and accuracy) of administrative data is often not available, and IT systems that would allow the transfer of the information are not always compatible.*

*In that respect, the assessors consider that Belstat should:*

*R15 Ensure that the provisions of Article 9 of the LSS on access to administrative and register based data are fully implemented and extended to all producers of official statistics.*

*R16 Publish, on Belstat's website, the list of the institutions with which a data interaction agreement has been concluded, including information on data sets and frequency – in order to improve transparency and accountability.*

*R17 Make, and operationalise, a clear distinction between ministries and agencies that collect data for exclusive statistical purposes (following the provisions of the LSS) and other organisations collecting data primarily for their own management purposes (administrative data providers) under their own rules and regulations (e.g. Ministries of Health and Educations). See also Chapter 2.1 about Authorised state organisations vs. data providers.*

**2.4 PROGRAMMING AND COORDINATION MECHANISMS**

115. Statistical systems with some degree of decentralisation need to be well coordinated for the sake of efficiency. The statistical office should be given a leading role as the coordinator of the system, and other producers should use the same standards, in particular regarding classifications provided by the statistical office. In addition, they should harmonise their methods with those used by the statistical office, and, last but not least, should include their activity and statistical outputs in the overall statistical programme to avoid any duplication or uncertainty. They should also provide their results to the statistical office for further dissemination. The statistical office, on the other hand, should support the work of other data producers, in particular by providing methodological assistance.
116. The basis of mid-term planning in the field of state statistics is to prepare a strategy (programme) of state statistics development for 5 years. Structural units of Belstat, the territorial state statistics bodies, and state administrative bodies participate in the preparation of draft strategies.
117. On the basis of submitted proposals, Belstat's Department of Planning and Organisation compiles a Draft Strategy to be considered by the Board of Belstat and approved by an Order.
118. In 2012, Belstat developed and approved (by the Order No. 70 of February 21, 2012) a Strategy for the Development of State Statistics of the Republic of Belarus for the period up to 2015. This aimed to address future multi-objective

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- tasks taking account of the experience of the three preceding strategic programmes for the development of state statistics of the Republic of Belarus.
119. In order to implement the actions of the Strategy, a corresponding annual programme of statistical work is developed and submitted for approval (annually, by December 1) to the Chairman of Belstat, before it is approved by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus.
  120. This programme consolidates the statistical work carried out both by state statistics bodies, and other government bodies that are authorised to maintain state statistics, on matters within their competence. The annual programme of statistical work reflects the statistical work envisaged in the multi-annual programme (the Strategy for the Development up to 2015).
  121. Belstat coordinates the activities of other government bodies in this area – it approves and promulgates official statistical methodologies, and it develops and approves the forms of state statistical surveys.
  122. The need for and feasibility of conducting particular statistical surveys is coordinated with stakeholders and reviewed by the Interagency Council on State Statistics.
  123. Work coordination, monitoring and control of the implementation of annual and multi-year programmes are carried out by Belstat's Main Department of Planning and Organisation on the basis of reports from the structural units that are responsible for the implementation of actions.
  124. The results of implementing these programmes are considered annually at an extended session of the Board of Belstat.
  125. In order to improve this work, Belstat is planning to develop and implement an automated system for the planning and control of the activities of state statistical bodies. This will facilitate the automation of all processes of statistical production, the creation of an effective system of control, and the significant reduction of labour costs.
  126. The annual programme of statistical work includes all the statistical work carried out – both by state statistics bodies (centralised state statistical survey) and by other government bodies authorised to conduct statistics on matters within their competence (non-centralised state statistical surveys).
  127. All the activities outlined in the statistical programmes are linked to the resources, i.e., they have been implemented within the means of the national budget annually allocated to Belstat for current financing, and international aid. When necessary, proposals are made for allocating additional funding from the state budget for the following year.
  128. The instruments that support Belstat's coordination activities of authorised organisations are:
    - obligatory coordination of draft laws, legal acts of the President of the Republic of Belarus, and Resolutions of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus on the issues of state statistics.
    - approval of forms of decentralised state statistical reporting and instructions for completing them, developed by authorised state organisations.
  129. The strategy up to 2015 comprises 140 activities, whereas the annual programme of statistical work for 2012 has 10 main sections covering a large number of activities. There is also a corresponding Statistical Production Work Plan. Plans

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are comprehensive, but many of the activities described are rather input (process) oriented, as opposed to output (product) oriented.

130. Belstat is planning to publish an Annual Report – progress against plans – for the first time in 2014.

### **131. Assessment**

*The mid-term and short planning system is comprehensive and covers all producers of state statistics, as well as all regional levels. However, it is rather input oriented. There might be a need for increasing efficiency in planning functions. The proposals to record labour intensity in general and the implementation of an automated planning and control system as foreseen in the ‘Strategy for the Development of State Statistics of the Republic of Belarus’ are good.*

*In connection with or in anticipation of this, Belstat should:*

*R18 Strengthen the Statistical Strategy and the Annual Programme of Statistical Work by:*

- extending them to include both the outputs and the sources of the other producers of state statistics;*
- improving the linkage between strategic development and operational activities as foreseen in the statistical programmes, with resources appropriation from the Republican budget;*
- basing them on explicit, defined user needs; including high level information about costs; and*
- referring explicitly to Belstat’s coordinating function.*

*R19 Ensure that the relationship between the Statistical Strategy and Annual Programmes of Statistical Work are explicit; and ensure that both are endorsed by Government and are suitably resourced.*

*R20 Streamline planning and control processes; and delineate strategic programming and associated (relevant) planning.*

*R21 Confront the need for high frequency of data such as monthly Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross Regional Product (GRP), population and vital statistics in the light of genuine user needs, and planned developments (such as environmental accounts) in the light of impending budget reductions.*



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### 3. NATIONAL STATISTICAL SERVICE

#### 3.1 ORGANISATION OF THE NATIONAL STATISTICAL COMMITTEE

132. According to *Section 1, paragraph 1* of the Statute of the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus (SNSC), the National Statistical Committee (Belstat) is the Republican government authority in the field of state statistics also referred to as the state statistics bodies in the LSS (*Article 1* and *8*). Belstat is directly subordinated to the President of the Republic and the latter appoints and dismisses the Chairman of Belstat. This important provision for the professional independence of Belstat is not mentioned in the LSS but in the SNSC. Neither the LSS nor the SNSC specify a fixed term mandate for the Chair but this provision is regulated by the Law on Public Service and mentioned specifically in the contract signed by the parties (Chairman and the Head of the Presidential Administration).
133. The National Statistical System is from a functional point of view strongly centralised and Belstat as the main producer of official statistics is also in charge of the regulation, administration and coordination of the System (see *Chapter 2*). However, *Article 8* of the LSS mentions that territorial statistical bodies shall be established within Belstat at all level of the administrative division of the Republic. According to the LSS and the SNSC, these territorial statistical bodies are an integral part of Belstat and directly subordinated to the headquarters. In that respect, it is questionable why they should be mentioned explicitly in the LSS and not only in the SNSC.
134. The LSS (*Article 8*) and the SNSC (*Section 1*) foresee that other state organisations may be established under the subordination of Belstat. At the time of the assessment, six subordinated bodies to Belstat – computing centres – were operational.
135. Thus, Belstat (National Statistical Committee) consists of the following bodies:
- a. The headquarters;
  - b. Seven main regional statistical departments, including the Minsk City and their 133 district and city statistical divisions (territorial subordinated bodies); and
  - c. Six Computing Centres (CC).
136. As mentioned earlier, the structural organisations of Belstat reflects strongly statistical production processes that are in place in the country. The headquarters is responsible for the aggregation and dissemination of statistical information, the coordination of the National Statistical System and acts as the guardian of the harmonisation of statistical methodology – whereas territorial statistical bodies are mainly involved in primary data collection, and processing. The distribution of human resources among the different parts of Belstat clearly illustrates this division of work: of 2,222 civil service posts, 354 are allocated to Belstat (16%) and the rest to the territorial bodies (1868 / 84%). An additional 840 non-civil servants support the production and publication of statistics – about 340 people work for the 6 CCs, there are 230 interviewers, about 60 staff who deal with logistics, and roughly 200 staff members working under short term contracts on the Labour Force Survey (LFS).

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137. The activities from Belstat are financed directly from the Republican budget (see *Chapter 3.2*). But here again 20% of the total budget is allocated to Belstat and 80% to the territorial bodies.
  138. *Section 2* of the SNSC describes in detail the main tasks, rights and responsibilities of Belstat. To a large extent this section mirrors the provisions of *Article 4* and *9* of the LSS.
  139. Before going into a more detailed description of the different constituents of Belstat, it is important to mention that Belstat and its territorial and functional subordinated bodies are connected through a secured corporate LAN and that all staff members have interconnected personal computers (see *Chapter 3.2.3*).

### **3.1.1 Belstat (headquarters)**

140. The Decree No. 445 of 2008 on the Statute of the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus (SNSC) formally establishes the National Statistical Committee (Belstat) under the President of the Republic. The first section of the SNSC states that Belstat is headed by a Chairman who reports directly to the President of the Republic. The latter appoints and may dismiss the Chairman. The four deputies of Belstat are also appointed and may be dismissed by the President upon the recommendation of the Chairman.
141. The Belstat Chairman is a high-level official of the Republic, and a member of the Council of Ministers (SNSC, *Section 3*). This is an ideal opportunity for the Chairman to represent not only Belstat but the National Statistical System (State statistics) in government meetings and participate in discussions about the annual programme of statistical work and the allocation of state resources (human and financial) for its implementation. But this prerogative must be carefully balanced with the principles of professional independence, confidentiality, and equality of access to statistical information.
142. The Chairman is assisted by a Board or Collegium (SNSC, *Section 3*). The Board is an advisory body consisting of the Chairman (chair of the board), his 4 deputies, 8 heads of structural subdivisions of Belstat, and the directors of the regional statistical departments of Minsk Region and Minsk City. The Board meets twice a month and is consulted on legal, management, coordination and methodological issues, including the preparation of the Statistical Strategy and annual programmes of statistical work. Decisions of the Board must be documented. Belstat has the right to initiate legislative procedures (drafting, amendment, withdrawal of legal acts) related to state statistics and in that respect the Board is often the first advisory body to be consulted. The Board is also involved in methodological decisions concerning other producers of official statistics and can invite, on an ad hoc basis, experts and specialists from other ministries and agencies. Once every quarter an invitation to participate in Board meetings is extended to all Directors of territorial statistical bodies.
143. No Methodological Board exists for the time being but there are plans to create a Methodological Board to be led by the First Deputy Chairman and consisting of the heads of Belstat's functional departments and divisions. The Methodological Board will be consulted on methodological issues for state statistics as a whole and experts representing research and academic institutions will be invited when necessary.

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144. Belstat is subdivided in 4 directorates, each of them headed by a deputy chairman. Directorates are further divided, depending on the number of staff members, in main departments (>15 people) or departments (<16 people). Main departments and departments may be subdivided into smaller organisational units (divisions). Most of the non-substantive (horizontal services) organisational units are under the direct supervision of the Chairman – with the exception of Dissemination and Communication, and International Cooperation, both of which are under the supervision of the First Deputy Chairman, and IT (main department), which is supervised by the Deputy Chairman.
145. The tasks of the latter are:
- the development and implementation of the strategy for the ICT infrastructure development;
  - the organisation and coordination of work in implementing the IISSS (Integrated Information System of State Statistics) and other corporate projects;
  - ensuring the functioning of the computer and network infrastructure, including the maintenance;
  - the design and support of selected software tools; and
  - the implementation of the information security policy.
146. All individual statistical data in electronic form are held by Belstat and data transfer from the regional offices is secured via specifically protected data transmission lines.

### ***3.1.2 Territorial statistical offices***

147. Territorial statistical bodies are part of Belstat, and are independent of local government authorities. Their activities are financed through the Republican (national) budget. As mentioned earlier, responsibility for the appointment and dismissal of heads of territorial bodies of state statistics rests with the Chairman of Belstat, without prior consultation with heads of local government authorities.
148. The territorial statistical system consists of 2 layers: 7 main statistical departments at regional level, including Minsk City; and 133 district and city statistical divisions. Close to 1,870 civil servants work at territorial statistical bodies; this represents 84% of the total for Belstat. The activities of territorial statistical bodies are directly derived from the national statistical programme of work.
149. Statistical bodies at regional and district level are responsible for primary data collection and the maintenance of local registers. They are also in charge of the automated processing of primary statistical information through data entry, control for completeness of the information, and arithmetical and logical control (which mainly involved checking against information collected in the previous reporting period (month, quarter and year)). Micro-data is sent electronically to the next territorial level for processing, further quality check and editing. This bottom-up process is supervised by Belstat, which is responsible for the development of the IT infrastructure and software for data entry, quality monitoring and electronic transmission.
150. In some cases, when distortions, errors, omissions, or non-response are detected, territorial statistical bodies have the right to visit government and business entities (but not households or individuals) to receive additional information and to correct state statistical reporting forms.

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151. In general, the organisational structure is the same for all territorial statistical bodies. The top-management of the office consists of the Director and 3 deputies. There are 13 substantive divisions and 7 general-function (horizontal services) divisions. The number of district and city statistical divisions depends on the size and the population of each region. The Statistical Department of the Vitebsk region has 23 sub-regional divisions, whilst the Statistical Department of Minsk City has only 9. In regional statistical departments each staff member is assigned to a specific statistical domain or administrative task, whereas in districts and cities, given the size of the statistical divisions, employees have a wider range of responsibilities.
  152. Beside regular information material such as ‘statistical bulletins’, press releases and ‘regional statistical yearbooks’, territorial statistical bodies are entitled to provide specific statistical services to territorial authorities and other users at regional and district level. For these requests, as well as for all regular publications, statistical data, methodologies and nomenclatures are approved prior to their dissemination. Requests for specific statistical services and products on fee-paying basis are met by the regional computing centres. For the Minsk City and Minsk Region statistical departments this work is carried out by the central office of the ICC.

### **3.1.3 The system of Computing Centres (CCs) of Belstat**

153. The system of Computing Centres of the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus (CCs) comprises six organisations – functional bodies subordinate to Belstat. According to Section 3 of the SNSC, the Chairman of Belstat appoints and may dismiss the Director of the CC. CCs are non-budgetary organisations in their own right. They earn their budget by selling publications and services; services ordered by Belstat account for up to 35% of CCs budgets. The Information and Computing Centre of Belstat (ICC) is located in an adjacent building to Belstat in Minsk, and territorial CCs are present in all regional statistical departments (with the exception of Minsk City and Minsk Region). Roughly 340 people work in the CC system, of which 150 are in the ICC. Staff members of the ICC are not civil servants.
154. The CCs have the following main tasks:
  - a. to ensure the development and maintenance of software for various statistical tasks, including software for the arithmetical and logical control of microdata at the territorial level and the maintenance and repair of hardware. In future, the CCs will ensure the maintenance of hardware and software used by Belstat; and
  - b. to print and sell printed statistical publications and to deliver tailor-made statistical services upon request on a fee-paying basis.
155. The computing centre in Brest specialises in the development and maintenance of software for state statistics bodies and other government authorities, including software for the arithmetic and logical control of microdata at the territorial level.
156. CCs in regions focus their work on:
  - technical support for any problems with hardware and software;
  - services related to technical support and the repair of hardware.

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157. There are organisational and administrative reasons for having a subordinated body to Belstat taking care of these activities, one of them being that it would be difficult to integrate such a large number of technical staff employed by the ICC into the payroll of Belstat.
158. In the future it is planned to change the structure of the CCs and create one republican computing centre in Brest, with branches in the regions responsible for the development and maintenance of all kinds of software and hardware for statistical processing. There will also be one publishing centre, in Minsk.

**159. Assessment**

*The overall organisational structure of Belstat reflects statistical production processes based on exhaustive data collection (state statistical reports) at the territorial level and the final aggregation, validation and dissemination of the statistical information at national level. This organisation of statistical production not only places a high burden on respondents but involves most of the human and financial resources of the system being employed at the stage of data collection (in the regions) – to the detriment of Belstat, where the improvement and development of statistical products requested by national and international users would require additional resource.*

*Belstat is in the process of improving its production processes and organisational structure along with the modernisation of the IT infrastructure and the development of new methods of data collection. The transition to electronic data reporting and the introduction of the Single Information System of State Statistics will be an opportunity to review the structure and the role of Belstat's territorial statistical bodies. Resources that are at present allocated to data entry in regions and districts could be gradually transferred to Belstat.*

*Regional statistical publications and datasets are currently provided by territorial statistical bodies and national information with some regional disaggregation by Belstat. Greater use of modern information technologies would allow users to gain access to regional and district statistical information from a single web portal managed by Belstat. Furthermore, the availability of online databases allowing users to select, extract and generate tailor-made tables, charts and graphs are likely to reduce ad hoc requests for data at regional levels. Territorial statistical bodies could focus on communication with the local media, administrative bodies, and businesses, and free up resources that could be used more effectively by Belstat.*

*In the long run, the 3-layer structure of Belstat with 7 regional statistical departments and in particular 133 district statistical divisions could be gradually (but radically) simplified along with the further development of information and communication technologies.*

*It is advisable to review the organisational structure of Belstat and its subordinated bodies. This process is already on-going and only two subordinated bodies will exist – a central computing centre in Brest with the regional computing centres as branches and the Minsk computing centre to become the printing and dissemination centre. In the long run also this structure may have to be reviewed in terms of efficiency and rationality of the approach.*

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## 3.2 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

### 3.2.1 Financial resources

160. The main sources of funding for Belstat are the Republican budget and some extra-budgetary funds, the use of which is governed by rules issued by the Ministry of Finance. The Republican budget has increased steadily over the years in absolute terms (by around 37% from 2009 to 2011) but due to a rather high inflation rate it has decreased in real terms. Between 2010 and 2011 the budget decreased in real terms by approximately 34%. It was stable in terms of share of GDP of around 0.06% but has decreased in 2011 to 0.04% of GDP.
161. The budget is designed on the basis of the annual programme of statistical works but mainly based on the budget of the previous year with some adjustments – no real cost calculation is implemented. The Ministry of Finance provides Belstat with coefficients for each budgetary item of the budget classification to be applied to the budget items of the previous year. The annual budget consists of different budget items:
- the biggest item is the expenditure for wages and salaries (amount based on the number of employees and certain payment factors) – around 60-70% of the annual budget;
  - the second biggest item is the expenditure on utilities and services (heating, electricity, buildings, etc.) – around 7-9%;
  - the third item are expenditures on repair – around 5-6%;
  - the fourth item is the expenditure on equipment – around 1-1.5%;
  - the fifth item is expenditure on training and upgrading of skills, payment of households participating in surveys – around 0.5-1%; and
  - the sixth item covers other expenditure (cars, transport, missions, communication, internet, etc.) – around 12-26%.
162. The draft budget broken down by the above mentioned budgetary items and increased by certain coefficients in comparison with the previous year is submitted to the Ministry of Finance. The Ministry of Finance in turn takes the decision on the budget needs and appropriations for Belstat.
163. In 2010, of the Republican budget approximately: 63% was spent on salaries and contributions (social contributions, taxes); 5% for the running repair of buildings/premises and equipment, training of staff, remuneration of surveyed families (households and personal subsidiary farmings), and individuals engaged under civil-law contracts in the household survey to study employment issues and survey of commodity sales at markets and in shopping centres; 7% for services (electricity, gas, etc); 10.5% for the implementation of the Integrated Information System of State Statistics (this share has decreased since then); 5.5% for the population census (again this share will decline as the census implementation is finalised); and 9% for publication, reporting forms, printing, software, missions, purchase of equipment, etc. The use of the budget is regulated by the budgetary code of Belarus as adopted by the Chamber of Representatives of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus.
164. The Republican budget provides the funding for both the territorial bodies and the head-quarters with a share of approximately 80% - 20%, the share of the head-quarters being slightly larger during the population census year 2010.

165. Until 2012 Belstat had access to some extra-budgetary funds – income from renting buildings and structures held on the balance of the state statistics bodies (around 150).<sup>150</sup> While in the past Belstat could keep approximately 22% of the income from the rent of buildings, from April 2012 all of this income is transferred to the Republican budget. In 2012 Belstat was compensated by the Ministry of Finance for this loss. For the following years Belstat will ask for a higher budget to compensate for this non-available income and the only source of funding for statistics will be the Republican budget.
166. The programme for the creation of an Integrated Information System of State Statistics running from 2007 included a budget for capital investment (for the development of a computing and network infrastructure, a corporate telecommunication network, electronic mailing system and electronic document management, PCs and other equipment) and applied research (development of the IISSS project, creation of sub-systems like metadata maintenance, collection and processing of primary data, storage of statistical information, etc.). Capital investment was particularly high in 2009 and 2010 while towards the end of the programme more budget was available for applied research activities.
167. According to Belstat the current budget is not sufficient for tasks such as the purchase and renewal of IT infrastructure, the repair of buildings and the purchase of software. The estimated under-financing is approximately 5M USD.
168. The population census in 2012 has been financed almost entirely from the state budget with a very small contribution from UNFPA for some technical assistance (1.7% of the total budget).
169. Salaries in territorial bodies are below the level of salaries in the capital and slightly below the overall average.

	BYR thousand 2012
<b>Average monthly wages and salaries in medium-sized and large organisations of the Republic of Belarus</b>	<b>3740,1</b>
<b>Average monthly wages and salaries in medium-sized and large organisations in Minsk city</b>	<b>4792,8</b>
Average monthly salary in the central office of Belstat	4610,4
Average monthly salary in territorial statistical offices	3373,2

**170. Assessment:**

*Belstat seems to have access to state funding sufficient for its core statistical activities but is short of funding for some more future oriented tasks as well as for maintaining a modern infrastructure (software, computers, buildings). Additional income can be generated by certain activities but this income is relatively low. It also seems that Belstat has access to some extra state funding for substantial infrastructure development tasks (such as the state programme for the Integrated Information System for State Statistics) and survey operations (population census) – but it is not evident that such extra funding will always become available when needed.*

*Salary levels are sufficient to keep qualified staff in the territorial bodies of state statistics, reflecting the less developed labour market and job opportunities in the regions. However, salaries are not sufficient to keep qualified staff in the head-*

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*quarters and territorial body of Minsk City due to more attractive job offers in the capital.*

*The procedure to obtain state funding is based on the annual programme of statistical work but has no underlying calculations for the costs of each activity and is rather an estimation of costs. The Assessment team recommends that Belstat should:*

*R22 Establish a cost calculation system for statistical activities within the annual programme of statistical work in order to have a sound evidence base for budget requests in the future.*

### **3.2.2 Human resources**

171. As of October 2012 the actual number of civil servants in the state statistical bodies was 2199 people. Additionally 230 people worked as interviewers, 59 people performed maintenance and technical support for the functioning of the state statistical bodies and 140 specialists had civil-law contracts to implement sample surveys on markets for retail trade statistics. 80 IT experts were also employed – 35 in Belstat, and 45 in the territorial bodies. 367 people worked in the 6 computing centres of which 160 worked in the ICC.
172. The figure of 2199 state employees (actual numbers) included:
  - 341 staff working at the head-quarters in Minsk,
  - 171 staff at the city office of Minsk
  - 309 people in the territorial office of the Minsk region
  - 300 people in the territorial office of the Vitebsk region
  - 289 people in the territorial office of the Mogilev region
  - 290 people in the territorial office of the Gomel region
  - 250 people in the territorial office of the Brest region and
  - 249 people in the territorial office of the Grodno region.
173. A relatively elaborate human resource policy is in place at Belstat, focusing upon recruitment, training at graduate entry level, and subsequent training and career development. The policy aims at supporting the achievement of state statistics strategic goals, recruitment informed by professional and personnel skills, professional development, career development and inter-personal communication.
174. The education level in the system is rather high with an average throughout the statistics bodies of 87% of the employees with higher education – this figure being 99% in the head-quarters and 84% in the territorial offices. Turnover of staff is relatively low – 61% of the staff have worked in the office for more than 10 years – but annual turnover rates have increased in recent years (from 11% in 2010 to 13% in 2012) due to the salary level and other more attractive job offers.
175. Belstat recruits externally mainly from the Belarusian State Economic University (which has a specialisation in statistics) – 142 graduates were employed during the last 5 years. This is mainly due to the fact that the system for distributing graduates to their future working places is still developing. There is a specific adaptation programme for these young specialists aiming at their full integration into Belstat and its territorial bodies, through professional and personnel training programmes.



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176. Normal recruitment for vacant positions in Belstat is done through the analysis of documents from applications provided to Belstat on own initiative, interviews with applicants, assessment sessions and tests. There is no publication of vacant posts – instead Belstat receives applications from people wanting to join the office and also actively searches on the internet. Internal redeployment is also used – mainly from territorial bodies to the head-quarters, and sometimes from the head-quarters to the territorial bodies.
177. Training is mostly ‘on-the-job’, complemented by courses and seminars. There is an external training programme organised by the Academy of Public Administration (mainly for staff on the staff reserve list, which comprised 65 people in 2011-2012), the Minsk Linguistic University (mainly for language courses, 30 people in 2010-2012) and the Belarusian State Economic University (25 managers and specialists for training in economics).
178. Each year a training programme is established. It focuses on continuous learning, and covers communication skills, self-education, personality development, motivation and institutional goals. The impact and effect of the training programme is evaluated annually. Belstat has also established a staff reserve list, which includes staff considered to have the potential to be promoted and to become managers. This list is established with the support of a Competition Committee which reviews proposals from the subject matter divisions, CVs, recommendations, work performance etc. This Committee establishes a list that is reviewed and adopted by the Board of Belstat. Such lists exist for managers in Belstat and for the heads of the territorial bodies. (These two lists are adopted by the Belstat Board). There is in addition a list that includes the top management of Belstat considered to have the potential to be promoted to managerial positions in Belstat or other state organisations (the so-called staff reserve of the President).
179. In February 2012 a new strategy for the development of state statistics was adopted; this also has an impact on the human resource policy. This new policy includes an annual evaluation of staff performance, the development of a staff database, the assessment of the quality of the staff, a continuous training and re-training programme and other elements.
180. Also in 2012 Belstat implemented a staff opinion survey including questions on satisfaction with the job, on the work environment, on the image of Belstat, career opportunities, training, relations with colleagues, etc. The overall response rate was 90% – it was highest in the district offices and lowest in the head-quarters. It showed that:
- staff satisfaction with the job was highest in the territorial bodies and lowest in the head-quarters;
  - satisfaction with the work environment was high (more than 60-70%) as well as with the technical infrastructure.
181. Although salary levels are satisfactory there is a danger that (especially) junior staff will leave head-quarters because of better paid job opportunities outside.

**182. Assessment**

*The number of staff and their education level seem to be appropriate for the current work of Belstat. Belstat implements quite an impressive human resource policy including well established recruitment procedures for attracting young university graduates, training and re-training programmes and career*

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*development programmes for selected staff members. Performance assessments are part of this policy as well and attention is paid not only to the professional development of staff but also to the development of soft skills such as communication, motivation, etc. The career development programme is based on objective criteria and includes relevant training.*

*Salary levels may pose a risk especially in the city of Minsk as better paid job offers are available for young and well educated specialists. The high inflow of young graduates in recent times suggests that Belstat should:*

*R23 Consider more flexible approaches to the allocation of tasks (the quality of work for young graduates is not particularly stretching), the development of more cross-department / project work, and more flexible working time arrangements. It is important to use the potential of these young graduates to the maximum extent possible.*

*It seems that mobility between head-quarters and territorial bodies is rather low and also mobility within Belstat could be enhanced to help the office to benefit from different experiences of staff members. Whereas staff number seem to sufficient in the overall system Belstat should:*

*R24 Review the distribution of staff among the head-quarters and the territorial bodies, especially in the light of the introduction of electronic data collection and web-based surveys. At some point a reallocation to the head-quarters may be envisaged – although this will require Belstat to seek permission to do so.*

### **3.2.3 Information Technology**

183. The Main Department of Information Technologies is responsible for the development and implementation of the strategy for ICT implementation and use in statistical production and for the maintenance and support of the information systems in Belstat. It comprises four Departments<sup>1</sup>:

- Department of Development of Integrated Information System of State Statistics (12 people);
- Department for statistical task programming (10);
- System Support Department (7); and
- Management of Projects Division (4).

184. The Department of Development of Integrated Information System of State Statistics has two divisions (Division for IISSS software maintenance and Division of IISSS methodology) and is responsible for the creation of the IISSS. The main goals of this system are the:

- implementation of the use of advanced technology in statistical data collection via the internet
- storage of primary statistical data in common centralised databases that ensure data confidentiality, consistency and integrity, and offer the scope to enable the production of summary statistics

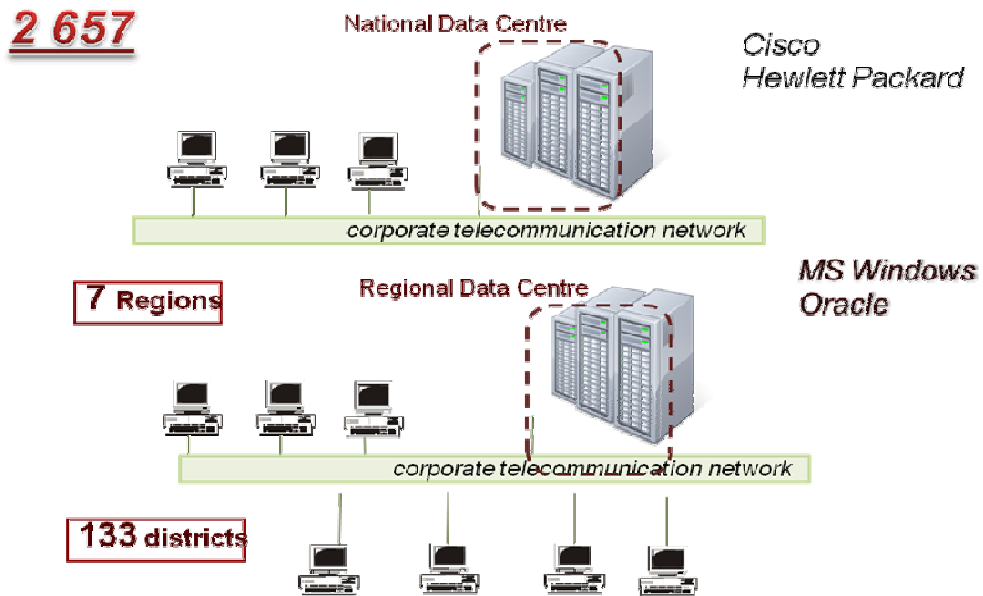
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<sup>1</sup> As of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2012.

- establishment of the integrated information statistical resource and access to information within the framework of the corporate network for all statistical offices (see *Picture 1*).

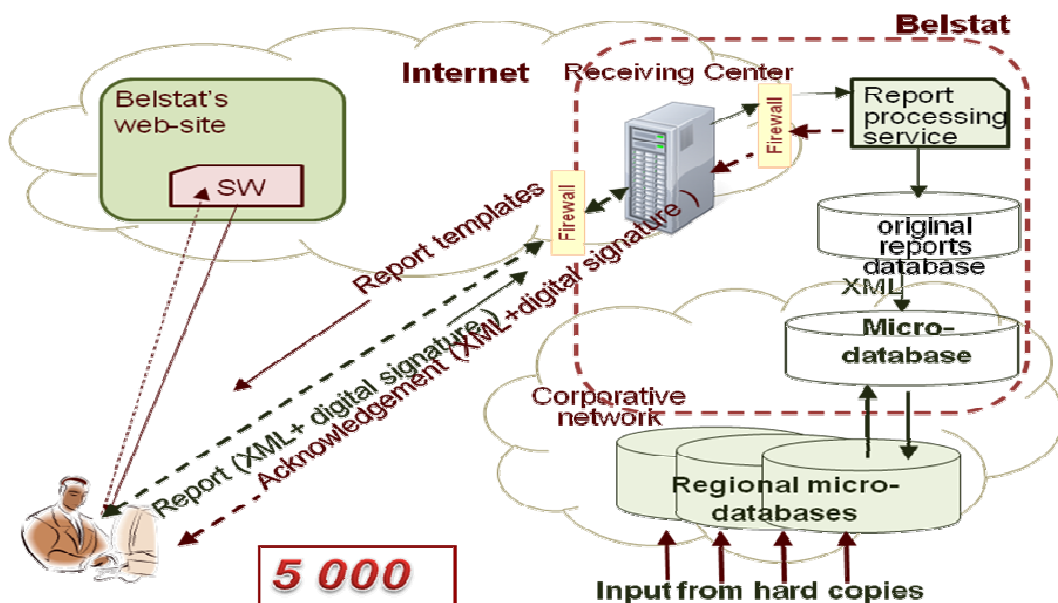
185. In addition, the implementation of IISS will enhance the maintenance of the statistical register, the management of metadata, and the generation of output tables.

Picture 1. Telecommunication and computing infrastructure



186. The system for collecting and processing statistical data (see *Picture 2*) is in the testing stage and will be implemented in 2013.

Picture 2. Collection and processing of statistical reporting



187. The Information System of Belstat currently supports:
- the automated corporate e-document circulation and control system;
  - protected corporate electronic mail;
  - the electronic mail of government agencies;
  - the automated interagency e-document circulation system;
  - the personnel management and government employees' e-recording system;
  - the system controlling the execution of the President's orders (EIS KVP);
  - the system of controlling and supervisory activity (IAS KND);
  - the software tool for testing new-comers to government service; and
  - the software tool for testing and assessing staff knowledge about management.
188. The situation with equipment in Belstat is reasonably good. Currently Belstat, including its territorial bodies, operates over 2000 computers and 600 printers, of which Belstat has 400 computers and 250 printers. The computers in the central office are less than five years old.
189. The total number of full time IT staff of the National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus is presented in the table below.

Table 1: Number of IT staff

	2010	2011	2012
<b>Belstat</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Regional and Minsk city offices</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>45</b>
of which			
Brest	9	8	8
Vitebsk	7	6	6
Gomel	6	6	6
Grodno	6	6	6
Minsk	6	6	6
Mogilev	8	8	8
Minsk city	3	3	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>80</b>

### **190. Assessment**

*Belstat uses modern IT equipment efficiently in its statistical activities. The implementation of a standardised and efficient system such as the Integrated Information System of State statistics will improve the efficiency of all phases of the statistical process.*

*The division of labour between the Main Department of Information Technologies and the Computer Centres allows for an ideal allocation of tasks and appears to work well.*

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### 3.2.4 Efficiency and ICT

191. The current IT systems and organisation of the Belarus statistical system are being modernised, and the Strategy for the Development of State Statistics of the Republic of Belarus emphasises the improvement of statistical infrastructure. The role of IT is central here. The regional offices are key in this respect, since the greater use of IT and a single system for reporting, compiling and disseminating statistics (the planned IISS – Integrated Information System of State Statistics) will contribute to making a highly decentralised organisational structure superfluous. The need for visiting interviewers of course constitutes an exception in this respect.
192. Today, data input, checking and editing activities take place at the district, regional and country levels. Dissemination is an activity for both regional and country levels.
193. Elements of implementing the IT strategy and developing the ISS comprise:
  - rationalising data collection and statistical production processes by automation with modern ICT tools;
  - technical solutions to ensure data security;
  - development of a new Belstat website, including the development of online statistical databases; and
  - reviewing organisational structures – in particular for business statistics – with a view to enhancing efficiency and improving statistical coherence and co-ordination.

#### **194. Assessment**

*The plans for modernising the IT and software infrastructure are necessary, and their implementation is supported. The following activities are crucial. Belstat should:*

- R25 Review the efficiency of the current arrangements for collecting and editing data at district and regional levels, and develop plans that optimise the use of resources to improve statistical quality.*
- R26 Review the structure and role of regional offices in the light of forthcoming IT developments (including electronic reporting) and forthcoming budget cuts; in doing so, reflect on the allocation of staff between territorial statistical bodies and Belstat and explore the feasibility of reallocating staff.*
- R27 Review the efficiency of the current arrangements of both regional offices and Belstat producing publications and databases (and the proposal to develop regional office websites).*

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### 3.3 METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT

#### 3.3.1 Surveys – general

195. State statistical surveys are conducted only by state statistics bodies (using the forms of centralised state statistical surveys) or authorised state organisations (using the forms of non-centralised state statistical surveys) approved by Belstat. This reduces the risk of the duplication of surveys at national level.
196. Government bodies or other state organisations may introduce additional reporting on matters within their competence – this is ‘departmental reporting’. Forms used for departmental reporting are reviewed by the Inter-agency Council to avoid duplication of indicators and surveys.
197. Every November the Interagency Council reviews the draft programme of statistical work for the following year. This contains the full list of all state statistical surveys.
198. The objectives of state statistical surveys are to meet the information needs of a wide range of users as well as to compile the system of national accounts and monitor both forecasts and programmes of the socioeconomic development of the Republic of Belarus. Belstat is responsible for the development of statistical tools such as questionnaires, methodologies for the calculation of indicators, and instructions for the organisation and conduct of state statistical surveys.
199. Survey forms comprise state statistical reports used in business surveys, and forms and questionnaires used in household sample surveys. The Interagency Council on State Statistics provides an annual review of the performance of state statistical bodies in simplifying and optimising reporting forms (to reduce response burdens).
200. The number of forms has decreased in recent years. In 2012 there were 244 forms, of which 112 are centralised (Belstat) forms, and 132 decentralised.
201. Information about completing forms is included in the publication ‘Statistics of Belarus’, which is published annually. It also includes information about the organisation and maintenance of statistics, a brief statistical glossary, and a statistical calendar of respondents. Some 3,000 copies are printed.
202. Planned actions to improve cost-effectiveness include the improvement of state statistical survey forms, the increased use of administrative data sources, and the implementation of an electronic reporting format for state statistical reporting (see *Section 4.6.2*).

#### 203. *Assessment*

*There is a comprehensive system of state statistical surveys in Belarus. Belstat has a strong coordination role, covering both methodology and the content of surveys, to avoid duplication and minimise the response burden. The number of forms has been reduced in recent years. The strategy to improve forms, increase the use of administrative data and to implement electronic reporting is appropriate.*

*The Assessment team considers that Belstat should:*

*R28 Continue to monitor response burdens in terms of the time spent (by respondents) preparing and submitting forms. (See also R37).*

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### 3.3.2 Sampling – household surveys

204. Belstat carries out the following continuous household sample surveys: sample household living standards survey; household sample survey to study employment issues (LFS); and the sample survey of personal subsidiary farmings of permanent rural residents. The sample household living standards survey provides information for the calculation of weights for the Consumer Price Index and for the compilation of household final consumption within the National Accounts, in addition to enabling the monitoring of living standard indicators, the calculation of income inequality and the measurement of the low-income population.
205. The samples cover all regions and Minsk City and are based on a three-stage sample design: stratification of administrative-territorial units (including large cities, small towns and rural areas), selection of primary geographical sampling units; and selection of households or persons within these. Data from the population census, from the Central Commission of the Republic of Belarus on Elections and Holding Republican Referenda, and data of rural council records constitute the basis for the sample frame. Samples are self-weighting, meaning that all households in Belarus have the same probability of being included (before the primary units have been selected). The sampling plan is updated every 10 years.
206. Data are collected both in face-to-face interviews and by self-recording (for example, a daily expenditure diary forms part of the living standards survey). Participation is voluntary, but households are paid to participate in comprehensive surveys. Hence, response rates are high (more than 80 percent).
207. Sampling for Belstat's household surveys is undertaken by sampling methodologists in the Living Standards Statistics and Household Survey Department.

#### 208. Assessment

*The sampling setup seems sound. As for the plans for further development, one could question whether sampling could not be used more in Belarus, especially in business statistics. On the other hand, some of the activities in the plans seem ambitious, for example the proposed time use survey might be reviewed carefully, given the scarcity of resources. The Assessment team considers that Belstat should:*

*R29 Consider the scope for more use of survey sampling in the domain of business statistics.*

*Belstat might also consider whether it would be more effective and efficient to have a dedicated team of methodologists, rather than having this type of expertise spread across the organisation.*

### 3.3.3 Quality Management

209. A range of activities to improve statistical production, including the development of a quality management system, are included in the Strategy for the Development of State Statistics of the Republic of Belarus for the period up to 2015:
  - Improvement of the institutional framework and the quality management system;
  - Development of partnerships with respondents;

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- Development of a system of relationships with users of statistical information;
  - Improvement of the dissemination of summary statistics;
  - Improvement of the statistical infrastructure, standards and practices;
  - Improvement of the system of statistical indicators and the methodology for their formation, and the creation of new areas of statistics;
  - Improvement of the conceptual and technological infrastructure of the Integrated Information System of State Statistics; and
  - Strengthening human resource capacity.
210. Based on this an overall quality policy was approved in 2012 (by the Board of Belstat, 12.09.2012 No. 24), covering the following areas:
- building a system of statistical data quality management;
  - forming partnerships with respondents;
  - providing for information demands and expectations of users;
  - forming a stable and highly professional human resource potential in state statistics bodies; and
  - building a process approach to manage activities and resources.
211. Belstat uses a broad definition of quality in line with international standards such as the ESCOP.
212. Guided by international standards Belstat developed an approach to assess the quality of statistical data and a questionnaire for statistical data quality assessment (based on the European DESAP checklist for quality assessment in the European Statistical System (ESS)). This system has been used for rating the quality of important surveys, and this has probably contributed to raising consciousness about quality across the organisation.
213. The quality policy comprises concrete steps such as:
- an annual quality evaluation, made by applying a rating method to all centralised state statistical surveys;
  - monthly reporting of labour input in statistical works;
  - a survey of burdens upon respondents (which will be monitored every 5 years);
  - the assessment of user satisfaction and trust; and
  - the assessment of personnel satisfaction (every 3 years).
214. Audits (internal and possibly external) are also possible elements of the work on implementing quality management.
215. No specific training programme exists to address quality issues. However, workshops are held to address pressing or problematic issues in statistical production or statistical domains.
216. The timeliness of releases is monitored by:
- District offices – for those statistics maintained by other government bodies (the deadlines being reflected in the annual programme of statistical work);
  - The Department of Planning and Organisation of state statistical surveys of Belstat – on behalf of the print media; and
  - The Department of Summary Information and Public Relations – in respect of the information posted on Belstat’s website



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217. An electronic document circulation system is implemented, which also enables Belstat to monitor the extent to which deadlines are met.

**218. Assessment**

*There is a good quality strategy reflecting best European practices in this area. It should be implemented step by step. In doing so, Belstat should:*

- R30 Review international best practice in presenting metadata, introduce a standard approach to the presentation of metadata on the website, and provide links to these metadata from the indicators.*
- R31 Work with Eurostat and UNECE with a view to measuring and reporting the quality of statistics drawn from administrative sources.*
- R32 Introduce quality reports covering the aspects of quality promulgated by the European Statistical System – including quality indicators (timeliness, response burden etc) – for the most important statistical domains.*
- R33 Continue to implement self-assessments and quality audits.*
- R34 Continue to document and streamline statistical production processes (from data collection to publication), and share them across Belstat and the territorial offices.*

**3.4 DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION**

219. The dissemination of summary statistical data is one of the main tasks of Belstat – as described in the Law on State Statistics (*Section 2, paragraphs 7.3 and 7.4*) and the statutes of Belstat.
220. Belstat categorises users of its statistics as follows – Government and other public authorities; profit-making organisations; educational institutions; research organisations; mass media; international organisations; and nationals (citizens) in general. Government and other authorities seem to be the most important users, and they are also specifically mentioned in the Law.
221. All users have equal rights to receive statistical information, and summary statistical data are made available to users free of charge – one hard copy, or via Belstat’s website.
222. Additional hard copies, as well as summary statistical data that are not covered by the annual programme of statistical work and that require additional labour and material costs, are provided on a charged basis. The provision of information on this basis is done by the Information and Computer Centre.
223. Statistics are disseminated in publications, press-releases and press-events such as conferences, and on the web. Belstat publishes more than 30 statistical books and 600 bulletins and other information material annually. Important statistical publications include Belarus in Figures, the Statistical Yearbook, Regions of the Republic of Belarus and a series of subject publications (e.g. on industry, and agriculture). Some publications which make comparisons with other countries are also published. Belstat has also published a book called Statistics for Schoolchildren, intended to enhance statistical literacy.
224. The statistical publications follow UN recommendations in form of the Guidelines for the preparation of statistical publications.

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225. Belstat has a close cooperation with mass-media, both state and non-state media. It has a special project with some newspapers to present statistical news in a popular and accessible form.
  226. As elsewhere, the website has become increasingly important in the dissemination of statistics. Statistical news and all important publications are available on Belstat's website. It also contains descriptions of methodology, although this is only in Russian language and this and other metadata are not directly linked to each statistical release or table.
  227. Monthly updates of the website amount to more than 200 pages and 150 files. Most of the statistics are available as publications in pdf-format.
  228. The number of quarterly visitors is about 300,000. There is a user survey for visitors on the website. About two-thirds of those who answer describe themselves as regular users of statistics.
  229. The strategy for the development of state statistics until 2015 includes building relations with users and improving dissemination; one important aspect of this is the planned development of interactive databases.
  230. There is a release calendar on the website. The deadlines for releasing statistical publications specify the month and the date, but not the time of day. The Assessment team was told that there has been no deviation from the release calendar.
  231. Statistical publications are sent simultaneously to different categories of users and posted on the website of Belstat. Press releases are published on the official website and circulated to the media at the same time.
  232. In cases where Belstat distributes preliminary (provisional) summary statistics, an appropriate note 'The data are preliminary and may be revised' is made.
  233. Tables in the publications as disseminated by Belstat are not well structured as data for subsequent years are not put in a row but below each other. All publications would therefore benefit from a thorough re-design to make them more user-friendly and readable, applying columns for years and indices.

#### **234. Assessment**

*In general Belstat appears to adhere to the principle of equal access to summary statistical data prepared in accordance with the annual programme of statistical work. All users are equal in their right to receive published statistical information, and summary statistical data are made available to users free of charge. However the Assessment team understands that (unpublished) LFS results have been provided to the Government. This not inconsistent with the Law on State Statistics, but is addressed at Section 4.4 below.*

*Belstat's dissemination has a strong focus on meeting the needs of users in government. In the future it would be appropriate to emphasise the needs of a wider range of users.*

*A large number of statistical publications are produced, and some innovative approaches such as joint projects with major newspapers on the dissemination of popularised statistics, and the book *Statistics for Schoolchildren*, are noteworthy. Belstat has been responsive to emerging needs (such as the publication of a weekly CPI).*

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*The cooperation with newspapers is an example of Belstat explaining what is ‘behind the numbers’ more than it does in its statistical publications and on the website. In general a more analytical approach to some of the dissemination should be considered, for example by adding appropriate analytical commentary to the release of new statistics.*

*The web-site seems rather old-fashioned, but there are plans in place to enhance it by including interactive databases. In the context of plans to upgrade the website, Belstat should:*

- R35 Publish Belstat’s statistical methodologies on the website in English, to encourage international peer review and to enhance transparency.*
- R36 Publish information about the response burden imposed by Belstat’s business surveys in terms of time; and publish plans to extend this to cover non-centralised surveys. (See also R28).*
- R37 Publish on the website, via interactive databases, all summary data held by Belstat.*
- R38 Ensure that the links on Belstat’s website to other producers of state statistic point directly to their statistics.*
- R39 Review the layout of charts, tables and analytical commentary in publications and on the website against international best practice.*
- R40 Ensure that databases and statistical releases include time series of data relating to discrete calendar (interval) periods such as months and quarters (as opposed to accumulated figures including earlier periods – see also R56).*
- R41 Provide training to users and potential users when new databases are made available on the website.*

*More generally, steps should be taken to strengthen equality of access to published statistics. Belstat should:*

- R42 Enhance the pre-release calendar to show both the day and precise time of release, for headline indicators (at least). It should be made more visible on the website; and its accessibility should be enhanced by allowing users to search by topic (as well as by date); and it should include releases to be published in the following three months.*

*It has been noted that in some cases regions may publish new numbers before the statistics for the entire country are released – meaning that the national figures can be aggregated before they are published by Belstat. Belstat should:*

- R43 Take steps to ensure that that statistics relating to the Republic of Belarus are published before, or at the same time as, statistics for the regions and districts.*

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## 3.5 RELATIONS WITH USERS OF STATISTICAL INFORMATION

### 3.5.1 Scientific community

235. There is a close cooperation with the Statistics Faculty of the Belarusian State Economic University – teachers in the Faculty helped to develop the organisational and methodological approaches to sampling for the LFS, as well as agricultural production by private citizens.
236. The Association of Belarusian Statisticians meets twice a year; its members include teachers (professors and associate professors) of higher education institutions, as well as representatives of state statistics bodies. The deputy head of the Association is the First Deputy Chairman of Belstat.
237. In addition, Belstat has an advisory council to carry out an expert examination of the appropriateness of its research work. This council includes outside experts – highly qualified specialists with expertise in a particular area of scientific activity. Research topics are discussed with the involvement of representatives of the State Committee for Science and Technology and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus.
238. Units of Belstat have held, with the involvement of representatives of scientific organisations, round tables on the following topics:
- ‘Household sampling survey in order to study employment issues’
  - ‘Multi-indicator survey of children and women situation in the Republic of Belarus’
  - ‘Methodology of registration of foreign investments’
  - ‘Information Society’
  - ‘Agriculture statistics: problems and solutions’.

#### 239. Assessment

*Belstat’s relations with the scientific community appear to be effective and supportive; the nature of their collaboration strengthens Belstat’s statistical activity.*

## 3.6 MASS MEDIA

240. At present Belstat’s media engagement is primarily the responsibility of its press secretary who is directly subordinated to the Chairman. The key functions of the press secretary are:
1. Ensure Belstat’s interaction with the mass media;
  2. Provide the mass media with official information about Belstat activities (except those referred to as state secrets, commercial-in-confidence, or other legally-protected secrets);
  3. Prepare and conduct information events to form a positive image of Belstat;
  4. Organise media coverage of issues falling under Belstat’s competence;
  5. Organise, jointly with structural units of Belstat, the preparation and provision to users of summary statistical data (information) intended for publication.

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6. Provide explanations to the mass media of the use of methods for the compilation of summary statistical data (information) and information on general changes in state statistics, etc.
241. Belstat's Main Department of Summary Information and Public Relations does not engage with the mass media. The key functions of the Main Department are to:
- prepare and disseminate summary statistical data on the economic, demographic, social and environmental situation in the Republic of Belarus;
  - provide information for, and develop and update, the official Internet site of Belstat;
  - organise and coordinate the work of territorial bodies of state statistics that relates to the preparation and provision of summary statistical data.
242. Belstat has recently worked in partnership with the 'Respublika' newspaper, which has resulted in the publication of full-page articles about the social and economic situation in the country.
243. The mass media representatives who the Assessment team spoke to were, to a considerable extent, very satisfied with Belstat's services and products. Belstat is perceived as trustworthy, professional and responsive:
- The strengthening of the Statistical Law that placed Belstat under the President of the Republic, rather than the Government, was seen as a positive step.
  - Statistical publications were regarded as well-prepared, structured and informative; the volume of statistical information and metadata has increased in recent years. The availability of information on the website, free of charge, was seen as very useful.
  - Detailed information is provided on request, and quickly; in some cases (such as international comparisons) Belstat has started to publish the information, which has avoided the need for specific ad hoc requests. Belstat's responsiveness in introducing a weekly CPI was welcomed.
244. Media representatives were content with existing arrangements for engaging with the media. They were positive about Belstat's conferences/briefings on specific topics such as foreign trade and demography. They felt that regular meetings, such as a User Council forum, might be superficial – they feel that they do not need a strategic input to Belstat, and that they are content with their existing frequent working level contact. They did not see a need for statistics to be published at a fixed time of day – preferring, instead, to repeatedly contact Belstat's press secretary (because this allows them the opportunity to take advantage of a competitive advantage).
245. The media representatives expressed interest in:
- More analysis and commentary – currently the media have to contact subject matter experts to ask what the figures mean.
  - Interactive databases on the (new) website.
  - The publication of statistics showing net (as well as gross) wages.
  - Better harmonisation of terminology across Ministries, for example in the domain of accounting/fiscal statistics.
246. Views were mixed about other state statistical producers (Ministries). Some media representatives preferred to contact Belstat's statisticians to obtain statistics from

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the Ministries, because they found it quicker. Others reported that they did not distinguish between the different producers.

247. Recently Belstat received an award for the objectivity and accuracy of the information it disseminates.

**248. Assessment**

*Media users were very positive about Belstat's trustworthiness, and its products and services. They were supportive of Belstat's plans and direction-of-travel. Consistent with this, the Assessment team considers that Belstat should:*

*R44 Add appropriate analytical commentary to the release of new statistics.*

*More generally, the Assessment team considers that Belstat should:*

*R45 Enhance the capacity and capability of the Press Office.*

### **3.7 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

249. Belstat's Division of International Cooperation (4 people) is tasked with cooperating with international organisations and statistical offices of other countries, with the completion of questionnaires from international organisations, managing international cooperation projects, and organising participation in international conferences, seminars and workshops.

250. Belstat participates actively in experts meetings, seminars and workshops organised under the auspices of the UN Economic Commission of Europe (UNECE), sharing national experience and benefiting from good practices in recent development of national statistical systems from other countries in the region. Belstat is an active member of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES), contributing to the development and harmonisation of UNECE and International statistical methodology and standards.

251. A comparably small number of projects with international organisations is implemented by Belstat. UNFPA supported the implementation of the 2009 population census, UNICEF is implementing a project on 'multi-indicator cluster survey to estimate the situation of children and women in Belarus', the World Bank implemented a project on the labour force survey, and the IMF has recently carried out a technical assistance mission on implementing SNA 2008.

252. Belstat has access to TAIEX funded activities but has not made much use of this opportunity.

**253. Assessment**

*Belstat is involved in some technical assistance projects but could make more use of the EU funded TAIEX to implement consultations in key areas of development such as business statistics, national accounts, and social statistics.*

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## 4. STATISTICAL DOMAINS

### 4.1 CLASSIFICATIONS

254. The Statistical Classification Division (of 6 people) is responsible for the maintenance and development of statistical classifications.
255. As well as Belstat several institutions are responsible for the development and maintenance of classifications: the State Committee for Standardisation (Gosstandart), the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the Ministry of Education, and the State Committee on Property.
256. In Belarus there is a uniform approach to developing classifications: the agency / institution responsible for the development and maintenance of a national classification prepares a new version and sends it to all stakeholders for comments and agreement. After reaching agreement, Gosstandart adopts a resolution on its approval. Belstat then decides whether to apply the national classification directly in its statistical work or whether to develop a version of the national classification for its statistical purposes. As a rule, Belstat initiates the implementation of the new classification in economic practice.
257. National classifications of the Republic of Belarus have the status of ‘state standards’ and are compulsory for use by state bodies. As well as their use in state statistical activities, national classifications are applied in a range of activities including: the forecasting and monitoring of social-economic development, the state registration of economic entities, the tax regulation banking sector, and the certification of products.
258. Belstat directly applies the following international, interstate classifications:
- Classification of the Functions of Government (KFOGU/ COFOG)
  - Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose (KIPC/ COICOP)
  - International Standard Classification of Education (MSKO 1997/ISCED 1997)
  - International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (MKB-10/ICD-10)
  - Standard International Trade Classification (MSTK rev. 4/SITC rev. 4)
  - Commodity Nomenclature of Foreign Economic Activity of the Customs Union (TN VED TC/FEACN CU), based on the Harmonised Commodity Description and Coding System (GS 2007/HS 2007).
259. Belstat also uses the following national classifiers of the Republic of Belarus – these are based on international and interstate, including European, equivalents:
- National Classifier of the Republic of Belarus on ‘Types of Economic activity’ (OKED), based on the Statistical Classification of Activities in the European Community (KDES rev. 1.1/NACE rev. 1.1).
  - National Classifier of the Republic of Belarus on ‘Industrial and Agricultural Products’ (OKP RB), based on the Statistical Classification of Products by Activity in the European Economic Community (KPES 2002/CPA 2002).
  - National Classifier of the Republic of Belarus on ‘Occupations’ (OKZ), based on the International Standard Classification of Occupations (MSKZ-88/ISCO-88).

- National Classifier of the Republic of Belarus on ‘World Countries’ (OKSM), based on ISO 3166-1:2006 ‘Codes for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions. Part 1. Country codes’.
  - National Classifier of the Republic of Belarus on ‘Currencies’ (OKV) based on ISO 4217:2008 ‘Codes for the representation of currencies and funds’.
260. As far as could be determined, these national classifiers fully comply in structure, content, and codes with the international, interstate equivalents. There are isolated cases of adjustments in the terminology used to ensure proper interpretability and conformity with relevant national legislation. In the national classifiers OKED and OKP RB some additional levels of classification are developed to reflect national circumstances (5<sup>th</sup> digit in OKED, 7<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> digits in OKP RB).
261. According to the decree of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus No. 302 of April 4, 2012, the final deadline for the transition to the new version of the classification of economic activities is January 1, 2016. This deadline reflects the need to prepare an information base for the transition to the new version of the classification, and the practice of developing a national five-year development program. However, beginning with the report for the year 2012, when conducting structural business surveys both the current and the new versions of the National Classifier of the Republic of Belarus on ‘Types of Economic Activity’, based on KDES rev. 2/NACE rev.2, will be used simultaneously.
262. The structure of the National Classifier of Services Rendered to the Population used at present in service statistics is compatible with the Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose (KIPC/COICOP). Belstat is planning, beginning in 2014, to cease using this classification and to switch to the separation of services to the population from the total output of the service sector.
263. The classification of services used in foreign trade statistics is based on the classification of the payment balance of the IMF. Currently, this classification is significantly itemised for different types of services.
264. The draft of the new OKED (NACE rev. 2) version has been prepared by Belstat with the involvement of the Ministry of the Economy and other state bodies and interested organisations within the framework of the Interagency Working Group. The new OKED version was approved by the resolution of Gosstandart of December 5, 2011 No. 85. The Ministry of Economy is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the new version of OKED in economic and statistical practice.

**265. Assessment**

*Belstat applies national classifications based on international and interstate classifiers, including those taking account of national circumstances, and national classifications developed on the basis of the national legislation. The Assessment team considers that Belstat should:*

*R46 Strengthen Belstat’s coordination role in developing new versions of classifications, in relation to the introduction of classifications in state statistical activity.*



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## 4.2 REGISTERS

266. Business registers are maintained in order to provide the uniform recording of respondents; to provide uniform principles of respondents' identification; to organise and conduct state statistical surveys; to ensure the formation of summary statistical data (information); and to enable the compilation of lists of respondents.
267. The Law on Official Statistics commits NSC as State statistics body to compile and keep a statistical register on the basis of the information submitted in the manner prescribed by the present Law and other legislation of the Republic of Belarus as well as received from the Uniform State Register of Legal Entities and Individual Entrepreneurs, other registers (records) and databases that are maintained by the government agencies and other state organisations (*Article 19* of the Law).
268. Belstat's Division of Registers (7 specialists) in its Main Department of Planning and Organisation of State statistical surveys is responsible for the maintenance of the business register.
269. The statistical register functions in accordance with the Regulation and Belstat's instructions (on the procedure for registration and de-registration of the respondents of state statistical surveys in state statistics bodies; and the order of updating the statistical register etc.) and other methodological documents.
270. The state registration of business entities is carried out by registration authorities – state statistics bodies register business entities as respondents of state statistical surveys. The Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus No.1 of January 16, 2009 approved the procedure for the state registration of business entities, and identified the registration authorities responsible for entering information about the state registration of business entities in the Uniform State Register of Legal Entities and Individual Entrepreneurs.
271. The Uniform State Register of Legal Entities and Individual Entrepreneurs (USR) is a nationwide system for the registration and identification of legal entities and individual entrepreneurs, designed to provide complete and accurate information about legal entities and individual entrepreneurs registered in the Republic of Belarus, and to maintain other public registers (records) containing information on legal entities and individual entrepreneurs.
272. The USR is maintained by the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Belarus. In addition, the monitoring of the state registration and liquidation (termination of activities) of business entities is also the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice. Registration is carried out by state statistics bodies by including respondents of state statistical surveys in the statistical register.
273. State statistics bodies obtain information from registration authorities through an automated information system (called 'Interaction'), which is designed for communication between the registration authorities and the tax authorities, bodies of state statistics, social security agencies, insurance agencies, customs authorities, archives, banks in the implementation of actions in relation to legal entities and sole proprietorships.
274. Belstat compiles and maintains the statistical register by combining, in a single database, data transmitted by territorial state statistics bodies, on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> days of each month. Territorial offices of state statistics put together and maintain the statistical register based on information about respondents of state

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- statistical surveys located in their territory (at the place of registration); they update, complete, correct, store and protect the information in the statistical register. At the territorial level, the process of entering particulars in the statistical register, and updating and deleting records from the statistical register, are carried out daily as the information arrives.
275. The objects of the statistical register are: legal entities of the Republic of Belarus having passed the state registration (about 175 thousand); and separate divisions of legal entities of the Republic of Belarus (about 17 thousand). Information on individual entrepreneurs in the statistical business register does not originate from the USSR but are compiled separately from administrative data provided by the tax authorities. This is mainly due to the reduced IT infrastructure capacity of Belstat. This might have an impact on the overall quality and consistency of the statistical business register. Belstat is aware of this issue and is working to improve its IT system in order to allow the inclusion of individual entrepreneurs in the statistical business register.
276. A multilevel linear relationship is established between the types of statistical observation units: each statistical observation unit of lower level relates to only one statistical observation unit of the corresponding upper level; each statistical observation unit of an enterprise type always has at least one statistical observation unit of a balance holder type; and each statistical observation unit of a balance holder type always has at least one statistical observation unit of a local unit type.
277. During the registration process in state statistics bodies the respondent is assigned a registration number – a general statistical code of enterprises and organisations. For the purpose of information interaction with the USSR, the following identifiers are used in the statistical register along with the registration number of the respondent:
- The identification code in the National Classifier of Legal Entities and Individual Entrepreneurs – a registration number assigned by registration authorities during the state registration of business entities that is used to provide identification and single state recording of legal entities and individual entrepreneurs; and
  - The payer’s identification number – a unique number for the entire territory of the Republic of Belarus and for all taxes, duties (charges), including customs duties, assigned to each taxpayer during the registration with the tax authorities.
278. The statistical register is a database containing a list of respondents of state statistical surveys, and which specifies the information necessary to organise and conduct state statistical surveys. Information in the statistical register is accessible to all structural units of the Belstat. The data in the statistical register are used by state statistics bodies for statistical purposes only and are not subject to dissemination, except for information about the name, location, phone numbers, activities, forms of ownership of the respondents, and other information that may be subject to dissemination under the laws of the Republic of Belarus.
279. The main planned improvements to the quality of the statistical register are:
- New IT tools for the formation and maintenance of the statistical register, which will ensure the increasing level of automation of analytical and methodological decisions and procedures for updating statistical register;

- Improvement of the mechanism for updating the statistical register using the administrative data of government bodies to improve the quality of the statistical register, and reduce the burden on respondents; and
  - Further improvement of the information base, formed in the framework of the statistical register, for conducting state statistical surveys and improving the reliability and quality of official statistics being generated.
280. About 3% of the legal entities in the statistical business register are sleeping units. For the moment, this information is not available for individual entrepreneurs.

### **281. Assessment**

*The statistical business register is the main survey sampling frame. It is updated using different administrative sources (the Single State Register, the State Register of Tax Payers, the State Property Funds, and the State Register of Holdings) by the territorial offices of Belstat.*

*The Assessment team supports the quality improvement initiatives that are planned, and in particular considers that Belstat should:*

*R47 Improve the coverage of the statistical business register in order for the latter to encompass all economic entities, regardless of their respective legal form, size, and field of activity.*

*R48 Implement the IT developments which would enable Belstat to maintain the register at its headquarters and to update it online.*

*R49 Move as quickly as possible to the NACE rev. 2 classification of economic activities, to ensure comparability with the statistical information of European countries.*

## **4.3 DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL STATISTICS, AND THE POPULATION CENSUS**

282. Belstat's Main Department of Service and Demographic Statistics comprises 29 people, seven of whom work on demographic statistics. Two people work on demographic statistics in each Main Statistical Department of the regions and Minsk City; in addition, District Statistics Divisions are involved in the collection, checking, aggregation and supply of demographic administrative data.
283. Belstat compiles summary statistics on population size, vital statistics (births, deaths, marriages and divorces), and migration. The sources of the data that Belstat uses are:
- Ministry of Justice – which provides duplicate copies of vital registration records, and medical death certificates. These forms include a range of socio-economic information which has considerable statistical value.
  - Ministry of Foreign Affairs – which provides the vital registration records of individuals who reside abroad.
  - Ministry of Internal Affairs – which provides migration record stubs of address sheets of arrivals and departures.
284. These data cover all natural persons who permanently reside in the Republic of Belarus including those temporarily absent (temporarily resident in the Republic of Belarus or staying in other countries).

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285. As far as the Assessment team could determine, Belstat follows appropriate international guidance and classifications:
- Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System (United Nations, 2003).
  - Handbook on Vital Registration and Vital Statistics Systems (United Nations, 2001).
  - Statistics on International Migration: A Practical Guide for Countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia (United Nations, 2011).
  - International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, 10<sup>th</sup> revision (ICSD-10).
  - National classification of the Republic of Belarus ‘Countries of the world’ based on ISO 3166-1:1997 ‘Codes for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions – Part 1: Country codes’.
286. Summary statistics on population size are compiled for the country, the regions, Minsk City, districts in regions, and main towns – by sex, and by age. Belstat collects and publishes statistics on population size, vital events and migration each month, in response to government concerns about the Republic’s declining population. Belstat and the Main Statistical Departments publish demographic statistics in a variety of books and bulletins, which are available in hard copy and via the internet. No microdata are released.
287. Belstat is closely involved in a long-term project (led by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, started in 2008), to develop a Population Register. The Register will be based on data from passports – the Assessment team was told that by 2013 it will include all passport holders, and that statutory requirements to hold a passport meant that by 2023 it will cover the whole population. It is expected to hold a wide range of data – personal information, work details, welfare payment information, and health information on all citizens in Belarus. It will not, however, hold salary details. The legal basis of the Register enables its use by the statistical authorities.

#### **4.3.1 Population Census**

288. Legal authority for the 2009 Population Census – conducted from 14 to 24 October 2009 – was:
- Law of the Republic of Belarus ‘On State Statistics’ No. 345-3 of 28 November 2004;.
  - Law of the Republic of Belarus ‘On Population Census’ No. 144-3 of 13 July 2006.
289. As far as the Assessment team can tell, the 2009 Census followed international guidelines.
290. The Census results were published in a variety of books and bulletins, in hard copy and on the internet. In total, over 100 predefined tables were published. Taking into account all breakdowns, about 32 thousand tables were produced, of which over 500 tables were at the country level, 3000 tables at the level of regions and Minsk City, and over 28,000 at the level of districts and cities.
291. In addition, Census data are made available in the form of 10% micro sample file which contains detailed data on respondents, households and dwellings. It covers all of the Census questions: demographic characteristics, place of birth,

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nationality, ethnicity and linguistic characteristics, migration activity, educational attainment, participation in labour force, occupation and economic activity of respondent.

292. The population estimate for 2009 from the Census was 170,000 lower than the corresponding estimate derived by 'rolling forward' estimates of natural and net migration change since the previous Census. Belstat experts told the assessment team that this was probably because the 'rolled forward' estimates included groups such as people who temporarily left the country without changing their permanent place of residence (and who were not included in the Census); however, they also suggested that the discrepancy between the two sets of figures largely applied to the very young and the very old.

**293. Assessment**

*Belstat appears to be providing a responsive service to its users of demographic and vital events statistics, and is closely involved in the development of the Population Register (which is likely to strengthen its statistical production activities in future). However, in an era of limited resources, and in light of the fact that demographic trends are typically relatively gradual, the Assessment team considers that Belstat should review the need for monthly population estimates, and vital statistics, as part of implementing Recommendation 21).*

*It is important for users of Belstat's population statistics to understand fully the strengths and limitations of population estimates, and of the different methods used to produce them. The Assessment team considers that Belstat should:*

*R50 Publish an analysis of the discrepancy between the 2009 Census population estimate and the 2009 'rolled forward' estimate, and comment on the implications for future 'rolled forward' population estimates.*

**4.3.2 Living Standards Survey**

294. The Living Standards Survey is a household sample survey.
295. The survey is conducted by 13 people in the Living Standards Statistics and Household Survey Department in Belstat headquarters (data processing, validation and the dissemination of statistical outputs), 39 people in territorial bodies (data entry and transmission to Belstat) and 150 interviewers (data collection and coding).
296. The purpose of the survey is to: monitor living standards indicators; calculate income inequality statistics; measure the low-income population; and provide information for the calculation of weights for the Consumer Price Index and the compilation of the household account in the National Accounts.
297. A baseline interview (conducted in December) collects basic data on the household and personal characteristics. Quarterly interviews (April, July, October and January) collect information about income and expenditure, and a two-week diary (completed each quarter) is used to collect information about expenditure and food consumption. Modules allow the collection of other, related data – for example, on living conditions (May) and material deprivation (September). Survey estimates are weighted by type and geographical distribution of households.
298. Households are paid \$10 USD a month for taking part in the survey. Households are surveyed for a year, and each year 75% of the households are replaced. The

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response rate – it is a voluntary survey – is over 80% (and is indeed over 90% in rural areas).

299. The survey covers 49 towns and urban settlements, and 46 rural locations, across all regions and Minsk City. It includes the total household population, excluding institutional households and students. Survey interviewers are based locally.
300. Validation includes the control of primary data, logical and arithmetic checks during primary data entry, and logical checks at the stage of database editing and in the process of primary data processing. Data processing includes imputation, aggregation, and the extrapolation of primary data on the general public.
301. The survey results are published in statistical books and bulletins, including on the website, and in the form of anonymised microdata files which are available upon request. These have been provided to international organisations, scientific institutions within Ministries, and academics (for example at the Belarus State Economic University).
302. Plans for further development include the measurement of poverty (in terms of material deprivation), a time use survey, a survey of consumer expectations, a system of modular surveys on topical socio-demographic issues, and the calculation of integrated indices for the comparative measurement of living quality at the district level.

### **303. Assessment**

*Belstat appears to conduct the Household Living Standards survey to international standards. Response rates are high, at least in part reflecting the relatively generous fee paid to respondents (which recognise the burden involved in completing a two week daily spending diary, every quarter). Belstat might wish to consider the feasibility of linking these survey data with administrative data (such as about earnings). The Assessment team was told that Belstat is considering conducting a Time Use Survey; Belstat should review the genuine need for such information in the light of other priorities as part of implementing R21.*

## **4.4 LABOUR MARKET STATISTICS**

304. Belstat's Labour Statistics Department comprises 15 people. A further 69 people work on labour statistics in the Main Statistical Departments of the regions and Minsk City; in addition, District Statistics Divisions are involved in the collection, checking, aggregation and supply of labour market data.
305. Data on wages and salaries and the number of employees in enterprises and in organisations are reported by businesses through state statistical questionnaires, administered by Belstat. Small and micro enterprises are required to provide data less frequently than medium and large businesses. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection provides data on registered unemployment.
306. As far as the Assessment team could determine, the Labour Force Survey (LFS) follows the relevant ILO recommendations and conventions:
  - Labour Statistics Convention 1985 No. 160.
  - Recommendations of the International Labour Organisation 'On Labour Statistics' 1985 No. 170.

- Standards related to statistics of economically active population, employment, unemployment and underemployment, adopted at the 13th International Conference of Labour Statisticians.
  - Methodological guidelines of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) 'Employment, unemployment and underemployment'.
  - System 'Key indicators of labour market' (KILM) and Guidelines on the use of the KILM, ILO, Geneva, 1999 and 2003.
  - International Classification by Status in Employment, ICSE, adopted at the 15<sup>th</sup> International Conference of Labour Statisticians.
307. A pilot LFS was conducted in the Republic of Belarus in November 2011. Starting from 2012 the LFS has been carried out on a continuous basis results. The achieved response rate was about 87%. During 2013, a sample rotation (25% per quarter) will be introduced.
308. The LFS results have not yet been published, although the Assessment team understands that the Government is considering them.
309. Labour market statistics are published in a variety of statistical books and bulletins, and on Belstat's website. The Assessment team was told that Belstat prepare bespoke statistical analyses for users, upon request.

### **310. Assessment**

*Belstat has a wealth of administrative data about different aspects of the labour market, collected at different frequencies. The LFS is a relatively new development, and will result in published statistics (these are currently available only to the Government) during 2013. (See also 3.4, 'Assessment' section above). All of this information is valuable, but the volume of it might hinder users' capacity to understand the messages contained in the statistics.*

*The Assessment team considers that Belstat should:*

*R51 Publish estimates of the main labour market indicators from the LFS.*

*R52 Publish and implement a plan for the coherent presentation and analysis of data from the different sources of labour market data.*

## **4.5 MACROECONOMIC STATISTICS**

### **4.5.1 National Accounts**

311. In total, 49 people are involved in the production of national accounts statistics in Belstat: 28 in the headquarters and 21 in the main regional statistical departments. It is noteworthy that with 5 staff members at Belstat and 21 in the regions, more than the half of the human resources dealing with national accounts are occupied with regional GDP estimates (sometimes referred to as Gross Regional Product – GRP).
312. Belstat produces and disseminates monthly, quarterly and annual GDP estimates at current and constant prices, including at regional level, following the 1993 System of National Accounts (SNA-93). Belstat also compiles annually a full set of accounts by economic activities and institutional sectors up to the financial accounts. Supply-Use Tables (SUTs) are set up once a year but only at current prices.

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313. Monthly GDP on a cumulative basis is published 12 days after the end of the reference period; quarterly GDP, on a discrete basis, is published 90 days after the reference period. First quarterly estimates are available once the last month of a quarter is compiled; i.e. 12 days after the end of the reference period. Annual estimates are available once the GDP for the last months of the reference year is compiled and refined with the aggregation of the 4 quarters of the reference year. Monthly, quarterly and annual GDP at national and regional level are disseminated more or less simultaneously. The second estimate of GDP and a full set of accounts by economic activities and institutional sectors up to the financial account are made available in December following the reference year. They are deemed to be final.
314. Belstat is currently working on the implementation of the new System of National Accounts from 2008 (2008 SNA). This important project is mentioned in the multi-year statistical programme and should support the establishment of financial accounts and balance sheets for the total economy and by institutional sectors. This revision will need thorough cooperation and coordination with the National Bank of the Republic of Belarus (NBRB) and the Ministry of Finance (MoF) which are responsible for, respectively, Balance of Payments statistics (BoP) and Government Finance Statistics (GFS). In that respect, Belstat initiated a standing inter-agency working group on macro-economic statistics, comprising experts in charge of the compilation of the national accounts (Belstat), the balance of payments (NBRB) and the Government Finance Statistics (MoF). At the time of the second assessment mission, the group was about to be institutionalised by the government through a decree.
315. The main priorities mentioned by Belstat in the framework of the implementation of the 2008 SNA are as follows:
- a. To improve the calculation and the distribution among institutional sectors of the financial intermediation services indirectly measured (FISIM).
  - b. To reflect R&D and military expenditures in the GDP according to the provisions of the new system.
  - c. To improve the estimation of the output of financial institutions, including the NBRB.
  - d. To refine the calculation of the GDP at constant prices.
  - e. To improve the methodology for the estimation of the non-observed economy; and
  - f. To extend the compilation of the sectors' accounts to the financial accounts and balance sheets.
316. The major primary data sources for the calculation of GDP estimates and the compilation of the institutional sectors' accounts are as follows:
- a. Belstat's structural and short-term statistics by economic activities, based on monthly, quarterly and annual reports and surveys.
- Micro and small enterprises, as well as individual entrepreneurs, are usually surveyed once a year and for some selected economic activities quarterly. When statistical information for these enterprises are not available for the compilation of monthly and quarterly GDP they are imputed based on experts' estimates. The production of these small and micro units currently represent about 20% of the total value added in the economy.



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In some cases, sub-annual statistical indicators are still produced on cumulative basis which complicates the compilation of national accounts statistics since the latter should be disseminated on a discrete basis. According to national accounts methodology, information for one specific period of time (e.g. month) must be distinct and separate from the data set of the preceding or following period of time. In other words the cumulative basis provides the results of the month of April of a given year as the sum of the months of that year from January to April when the discrete basis would show the results of each month from January to April independently. For this reason, the cumulative approach makes it more difficult to identify and analyse changes in time series and doesn't allow for seasonal adjustment.

b. Statistical information from household surveys (e.g. household living standard survey) and sample survey of personal subsidiary plots of permanent rural residents.

c. Monthly, quarterly and annual budget execution reports from the MoF.

These are broadly consistent with the 2001 Government Finance Statistics (GFS) Manual. Nevertheless GFS are compiled on a cash recording method (revenue and expenses are recorded when respectively cash is received or disbursed) and not on an accrual basis (at the time the transaction occurs). To some extent definitions and coverage of transactions as recorded in the quarterly and annual budget execution reports from the MoF may also differ from the 2001 GFS methodology. Necessary adjustments are made annually by Belstat.

d. The Balance of Payments statistics (BoP) from the NBRB.

The NBRB has already implemented the 6th edition of the IMF Manual of the Balance of Payments and International Investment Position. The 6th edition of the IMF manual is fully harmonised with the 2008 SNA (e.g. allocation of FISIM) but diverges slightly from the SNA-93 which is the methodology currently used by Belstat for the compilation of national accounts.

e. Price statistics and other volume indicators for the calculation of the GDP at constant prices.

Belstat uses its own consumer and producer price indices for the calculation of GDP at constant prices. These indicators are complemented by a full range of other information, such as the consumer price index of partner countries for the deflation of imported services. The consistency and accuracy of price indices for the compilation of GDP estimates are not systematically cross checked since the SUTs are not set up at constant prices.

f. Other administrative data are widely used for the compilation of GDP, in particular for the calculation of monthly and quarterly aggregates (as some of the statistical data used for the compilation of final annual national accounts are not available on a monthly and in some cases quarterly basis). This administrative and ad hoc information is complemented by experts' estimates and imputations.

Most of the nomenclatures used for the compilation of national accounts are in line with international standards, but there is a need to update the national nomenclature of economic activities (ISIC 3/NACE rev.1.1) to the latest version of the corresponding international classifications (ISIC 4/NACE rev.2). The adaptation of economic classifiers to the latest international standards is part of the multi-year statistical programme and should be completed by 2016.

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The reference approach to compile GDP estimates is the production (value-added) approach. Annual GDP estimates with three methods are produced since 1990; quarterly estimates with production method are produced since 1992 at current and constant prices. From 1994 quarterly GDP estimates are also produced at current and constant prices using the expenditure approach, and from 1997 – at current prices using the income approach. At current and constant prices the reconciliation of the two approaches (production and expenditures) lead to a rather small statistical discrepancy, but the latter is volatile over time.

Annual national accounts data are published in National Accounts of the Republic of Belarus, and GDP estimates in various annual and quarterly bulletins.

Cumulative monthly data at the national and regional levels are also available on Belstat's website. Few long time series of disaggregated data are available on the website, and there is no user-friendly dissemination database of national accounts statistics.

### **317. Assessment**

*Belstat produces national accounts largely in compliance with the methodology provided in the SNA-93. GDP estimates and the institutional sectors' accounts are consistent and accurate. The quality of data sources is good and in general sound statistical techniques are used for the compilation of the national accounts statistics.*

*Belstat is in the process of implementing 2008 SNA. The main priorities and issues mentioned in the framework of this important project (see above) are relevant and deserve special attention not only from the Main Department of National Accounts but from all data providers and stakeholders inside and outside Belstat. In that respect, Belstat should:*

*R53 Play an active role in the newly established standing inter-agency working group on macro-economic statistics.*

*This group should not be only consulted in the framework of the implementation of the 2008 SNA but coordinate and advise other members, namely the National Bank and the Ministry of Finance, on the implementation of the latest recommendations on the Balance of Payments and the Government Finance Statistics.. The group should meet on a regular basis and discuss openly all major issues that might impact any of the macro-economic statistics produced by these institutions, including the necessary revision of related basic economic statistics. The group could operate under the umbrella of the Methodological Committee (committee of producers).*

*The Ministry of Finance should:*

*R54 Prioritise the implementation of sound GFS according to the 2001 IMF methodology.*

*Belstat should, as a priority:*

*R55 Implement a change in the production and publication of National Accounts, particularly key indicators such as GDP (including regional GDP), from cumulative estimates to estimates for discrete periods. (See also R40).*

*The consistency of the three approaches to the estimation of the GDP could be further improved. In that respect SUTs at current and constant prices are the*

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*appropriate tools to identify the reasons for the high volatility of the statistical discrepancy. It would also contribute to detecting any inconsistencies in the statistical techniques and assumptions used for the deflation of the GDP's components on the production and expenditures approaches.*

*The compilation of monthly and quarterly GRP (regional GDP) estimates require significant resources while providing little analytical value. Belstat should:*

*R56 Consult users and in particular the Statistical Council, about a proposal to abolish the compilation of monthly and quarterly regional GDP. To some extent this concern could also be addressed to monthly national GDP estimates.*

*As part of implementing Recommendation 40, Belstat should make national accounts data available through an on-line dissemination database that allows users to select, extract and generate tailor-made tables and figures.*

#### **4.5.2 External Trade Statistics (Goods)**

318. In compliance with the legislation of the Republic of Belarus, the authorities responsible for maintaining external trade statistics are the State Customs Committee and Belstat (the external trade statistics department comprising 13 specialists and constituting a part of the Main Department of Trade statistics with 24 specialists in total).
319. External Trade Statistics of the Republic of Belarus are compiled according to international methodologies. The concepts and definitions applied are based on:
  - International Merchandise Trade Statistics Compilers Manual (UNSD, 2004 and UNSD, 2010).
  - Uniform methodology of customs statistics of external trade of the Commonwealth of Independent States member countries.
  - Uniform methodology for maintaining customs statistics of external trade and statistics of mutual trade of the Customs Union member countries.
  - Instruction for the compilation of customs statistics data on external trade and statistics of mutual trade of the Customs Union member countries.
  - calculation of unit value indices based on external trade data (TREND application) (Eurostat); and
  - methodological recommendations for the calculation of external trade in goods indices (CISSTAT).
320. The statistics are based on a complete record of all movements of goods across the customs border for commercial purposes. Shipments and receipts of goods of total value of 1000 Euro and more that are traded with Customs Union member countries (Russia and Kazakhstan) are recorded. For selected goods (oil, gas, electricity, potassium and nitrogenous fertilisers, caprolactam, bunker fuel, etc.), Belstat carries out statistical survey by collecting monthly reports from exporters/importers of these commodities. For non-observed exports/imports of selected goods (clothing, footwear, tobacco, etc.), Belstat makes imputations using a balance method, mirror statistics and expert estimates.
321. Exports are valued in FOB price, imports in CIF. Data on trade of the Republic of Belarus with the Customs Union member countries are compiled on the basis of the contract value of goods.

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322. The State Customs Committee provides to Belstat a database on external trade in goods and also the information on transport vehicles imported by individuals for personal use.
323. The validation procedures of source data include format and logical control for the completeness and correctness of fields in the declarations on goods; and arithmetic and logical control. Erroneous data are edited on the basis of revised reports provided by respondents.
324. Volumes of foreign merchandise trade are adjusted to reflect non-observed trade using different sources of data and mirror comparisons. Primary data from respondents' reports are processed by territorial units and Belstat. An aggregated database of external trade in goods statistics is compiled at the level of Belstat by merging input databases. The quality of output data is monitored at all stages of data processing using programme control algorithms predefined in problem description, and also using visual logical, arithmetic and format and logical controls, and by context and mirror checks.
325. The data revision policy for data on external trade in goods includes two types of revisions:
- regular – which take place simultaneously with the standard process of data production and are a component of this process. Regular revisions are made: monthly and annually;
  - special revisions – which take place if changes occur in the methodology, classifications, or data sources.
326. Data on external trade in goods are disseminated both in electronic format and in the form of print publications. The forms of dissemination are:
- statistical bulletins – monthly on the 35<sup>th</sup>-45<sup>th</sup> day, quarterly – on the 45<sup>th</sup> day; express information – on the 30<sup>th</sup> day;
  - data books: 'Foreign Trade of the Republic of Belarus' – annually (August); 'Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Belarus', 'Regions of the Republic of Belarus', sections in the subject-matter data books (industry, agriculture, prices, transport, etc.);
  - data on exports and imports of goods at 6-digit level of TN VED TS by countries are posted on Belstat's website – starting from the final results for January 2012, data are available on the website of Belstat;
  - aggregated databases of external trade in goods are provided to international organisations (UNSD, Eurostat, Eurasian Economic Commission);
  - information exchange on a regular basis with statistical offices of Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Georgia, Latvia.
327. Data are compiled and published in accordance with the schedules prescribed by the Statistical Work Programme and the publication release dates suggested in the USD International Merchandise Trade Statistics: Concepts and Definitions (2010). Metadata (methodologies, instructions, classifications) are available on the websites of Belstat, and the State Customs Committee (as pertaining to the compilation of external trade data in accordance with the jurisdiction). Metadata are presented in all publications. Monthly and quarterly statistical publications include brief methodological comments; the statistical book 'Foreign Trade of the Republic of Belarus' contains detailed metadata.

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### 328. *Assessment*

*External trade statistics appears to be well developed and to follow international standards. Customs declarations and special surveys are the main sources of primary data. Data which are provided to Belstat by the customs authorities are checked by Belstat's specialists and some adjustments are made using additional data sources. Unclear issues are discussed with the Customs and corrected, if necessary. All data are provided monthly to the National Bank for the compilation of Balance of Payments statistics. Belstat should:*

*R57 Use all possible data sources for the estimation of shuttle trade and other non-observed international trade in goods.*

#### 4.5.3 *Balance of Payments Statistics*

329. The Main Department of Balance of Payments and Banking Statistics of the National Bank of the Republic of Belarus are responsible for the external sector in the Republic of Belarus: Balance of Payments, International investment position, and external debt.
330. Belarus's BoP statistics reach a high level of compliance with international requirements. Statistics about BoP and the international investment position of the Republic of Belarus for 1993-2011 are produced in accordance with the methodological concepts of the 5<sup>th</sup> version of Balance of Payments Guidance (IMF, 1993). Starting from 2011, data on BoP and the international investment position of the Republic of Belarus are compiled, submitted to the IMF and published (for the first time in September 2012) on the basis of the 6<sup>th</sup> version of Balance of Payments and International Investment position Guidance (IMF, 2009).
331. The classifications employed in the balance of payments of the Republic of Belarus comply with the methodological recommendations of IMF provided in the sixth edition of the Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual (IMF, Washington 2009).
332. BoP statistics are presented in conformity with the SNA classification of institutional sectors: central bank, depository institutions (except central bank), government sector, and other sectors. Data on other sectors are broken down into the transactions of other financial organisations, the transactions of non-financial enterprises, and households and non-profit institutions serving households (NPISHs). The standard presentation of the BoP statistics groups external economic transactions with goods, services, income and other financial valuables according to the standard classification similar to SNA and other systems of macroeconomic statistics. The balance between BoP transactions equals zero. The analytical presentation differs from the standard presentation by separately identifying the financial account of transactions related to the changes in the official reserve assets of the Republic of Belarus, the attraction of credits by official authorities to finance the BoP deficit, and transactions of exclusive funding, including overdue liabilities.
333. The main data sources used for the compilation of BoP are:
  - the system of bank reporting on external economic activities which lies under the control of the National Bank of the Republic of Belarus;

- reporting of resident organisations of the Republic of Belarus on external economic transactions;
  - government authorities of the Republic of Belarus; and
  - information from the Central Bank of the Russian Federation.
334. The system of bank reporting covers two types of respondents: depository institutions of the Republic of Belarus (which report on the external economic transactions of their clients who are resident in the Republic of Belarus, and on their own external economic transactions); and resident organisations of the Republic of Belarus which have accounts outside the banking system of the country.
335. Government authorities of the Republic of Belarus comprise the National Statistical Committee, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the State Customs Committee, and other central and local authorities. They provide information to the NBRB on a monthly or quarterly basis.
336. The system of reporting of non-financial institutions resident in the Republic of Belarus is used by Belstat to collect data on international trade in goods and services, on mutual liabilities of country's organisations with external economic partners, on export-import transactions, on foreign investment in the economy of the country and on Belarus' investment abroad.
337. Belstat, in compliance with its Agreement on Information Interaction with the National Bank of the Republic of Belarus, provides summary statistics on:
- the availability and flows of foreign investment in the real sector of the economy (excluding banks) broken down by area, economic activity, countries of the world, and government authorities;
  - the status of corporate accounts – broken down by area, economic activity, and government authorities; and
  - aggregated data on exports and imports of goods (the statistical database of external trade in goods of the Republic of Belarus) by:
    - commodity (at 10-digit level of TN VED CU (Commodity Nomenclature of Customs Union; by country (regions of Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan);
    - types of external economic transactions;
    - type of settlement;
    - broader commodity groups;
    - the regions and districts of the Republic of Belarus – aggregated data on exports and imports of services (the statistical database of external trade in services of the Republic of Belarus) by type of services and by country.
338. Information from the Central Bank of the Russian Federation is provided quarterly on the basis of an agreed regulation on data exchange between the Central Bank of the Russian Federation and the National Bank of the Republic of Belarus.
339. Belstat validates the source data to detect erroneous or incomplete information using: arithmetic and logical checks, benchmarking with previous period, and cross-checks. When errors are detected, the data are edited.
340. Appropriate formal arrangements exist to promote data sharing and coordination among the agencies that contribute to the production of BoP Statistics.

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341. Data are processed and produced using Microsoft Access and Microsoft Excel. In the course of data processing and the production of output data, logical and arithmetic checks, benchmarking with previous periods and cross-checks are applied. When BoP data are processed and analysed, they are checked against data on banking statistics and mirror statistics of partner countries provided by the BoP producers in the other countries, and against publications of international financial organisations.
342. Changes to BoP data are made mainly due to: revisions of official statistics; statistical discrepancies identified while matching with other data sources; the identification of new data sources on external economic transactions; ‘mirror’ statistics of partner countries; and changes in methodological approaches.
343. In accordance with the rules of procedure approved by the NBRB, statistics of the external sector of the Republic of Belarus are revised once a year and are published annually in September – when the balance of payments for the first half of the current year is released. Data on external trade in goods and services for the reference quarter are published simultaneously with the revised data for previous periods. The revised time series is available on the official website<sup>2</sup> of the NBRB, and on the IMF SDDS National Summary Data Page<sup>3</sup>. Users are informed about revisions of BoP data both in electronic form and on paper.
344. BoP statistics are published both in electronic form and in hard copy. They are provided to the government authorities of the country, international financial and statistical organisations, central banks of partner countries in external economic activities, educational institutions, and other organisations and authorities. BoP statistics are published<sup>4</sup> on the official website of the National Bank of the Republic of Belarus, on the IMF SDDS National Summary Data Page, and in the IMF publications ‘International Financial Statistics’ and ‘Balance of Payments Statistics Yearbook’. The Advance Release Calendar of NBRB prescribed by SDDS is available<sup>5</sup> on a monthly basis.
345. Information about the BoP methodology is available on the official website of NBRB, on the IMF SDDS National Summary Data Page, in the analytical information bulletin ‘Balance of Payments of the Republic of Belarus’, in the NBRB Banking Statistics Bulletin, and in the IMF publication ‘Balance of Payments Statistics Yearbook’.
346. A description of the methodological standards and techniques of balance of payments compilation, including description of data sources and methods for the estimation of each specific item and individual transactions are published in the analytical information bulletin ‘Balance of Payments of the Republic of Belarus’, in the NBRB Banking Statistics Bulletin, and in the IMF publication ‘Balance of Payments Statistics Yearbook’.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.nbrb.by>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.belstat.gov.by/homep/en/specst/np.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nbrb.by/statistics/BalPay>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.nbrb.by/statistics/SStandard/calendar.asp>

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### 347. *Assessment*

*The methodology used to produce the Balance of Payments of the Republic of Belarus is harmonised with international standards, and timeliness is good. The National Bank of the Republic of Belarus should:*

*R58 Continue the improvement of balance of payments statistics in accordance with the new requirements of 6th version of Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Guidance (IMF, 2009). This work should be coordinated by the newly established standing inter-agency working group on macro-economic statistics (see R54).*

#### 4.5.4 *Price statistics*

348. The Main Department of Price Statistics, with 17 staff members, is responsible for the compilations of price indices. Local price divisions (57 staff members) are responsible for data collection, data entry and transferring the data to the price statistics divisions of Main regional statistical Departments. Price statistics divisions in each region (68 staff members) are responsible for price collection in the regional centres and the calculation of elementary indices, arithmetical and logical control of the collected data.
349. The state statistical survey of prices is organised, and the consumer price index and industrial and agricultural producer price indices are calculated, taking into account the basic recommendations and provisions of the Consumer Price Index Manual and Producer Price Index Manual prepared by ILO, IMF, OECD, Eurostat, the United Nations, IBRD, and WB in 2004.
350. The main principles of the organisation of the statistical survey of prices are based on the international practices. The key direction in building the system of price surveys and calculating price (tariff) indices is the establishment of methodological approaches which include:
- the selection of reference organisations to survey prices (tariffs) of goods (services);
  - the formation of sets of representative goods/services;
  - the organisation of surveys of prices/tariffs in sampled reference organisations;
  - the use of uniform principles for constructing base weights with their annual revision;
  - the calculation of individual, group, aggregated and regional price and tariff indices; and
  - the single calculation formula for the whole family of price/tariff indices.
351. Equivalent approaches to computing price/tariff indices allow for the comparison of price/tariff indices dynamics in all sectors of the economy.
352. At present Belstat has the following system of price/tariff indices:
- in the consumption sector:
    - consumer price indices of goods and services;
    - core consumer price index (core inflation);
    - price indices of the housing market.



- in the production sector:
    - industrial producer price indices;
    - agricultural producer price indices;
    - freight tariff indices;
    - tariff indices of communication services for natural and legal persons and individual entrepreneurs;
    - price parity indices of industrial products, works and services consumed by agricultural enterprises and sold agricultural produce.
353. The level and changes in prices in different sectors of the economy are surveyed in a sampled network of reference enterprises. To survey prices of goods and services in all sectors of the economy, reference enterprises that are characteristic of corresponding branches of the economy for the country as a whole are selected. Price/tariff surveys cover enterprises of all ownership types.
354. The Consumer Price Index is based on the CPI Manual (2004) and 1993 SNA; it is a chained Laspeyres index, and follows national concepts. The goods and services are classified according to COICOP.
355. Prices are collected in 31 towns, for 442 items. The outlets (retail trade units and units rendering services to the population) are selected on the basis of the data from state statistical reports on the volumes of sales of goods and services to the population, and the data on the place of purchase of selected food and non-food goods from the household living standard survey. The outlets are selected purposefully, taking into account their location and size (large, medium-sized and small) defined by sales volumes. Almost 5500 outlets are covered. The weights are derived from the annual Household Living Standard Survey (consumption expenditure).consumption expenditure) Additional information is used for adjusting the weights; the weights are updated annually. More than 50,000 price quotes are collected monthly, by 112 price collectors working in the field.
356. Prices and tariffs in the consumer market are surveyed on a weekly and monthly basis. Prices of goods and services are recorded from the 10th to 30th of each month. Prices in the consumer market are recorded weekly as of Tuesday for an abridged list of goods and services to estimate inflation. The compilation of summary data for weekly price recording is completed on Fridays.
357. Prices are collected in the regional centres, Minsk city and cities of regional subordination, and elementary indices are compiled at all these levels. Aggregated indices are then compiled in the following breakdown: country, regions (oblasts) and Minsk city.
358. Disaggregated price indices are published only at national level while aggregated indices are also available at regional level.
359. Core Consumer Price Index (core inflation) has been estimated in Belarus since 2003 at the request of the National Bank of the Republic of Belarus. Core inflation is calculated using the ‘exclusion method’. The components which are considered as volatile and excluded from the core inflation are:
- the goods and services which prices are regulated by the government (mostly foodstuffs – milk, bread, meat, etc.; also fuels and some kinds of services – public transport, communication, utility services, higher education services, etc.);
  - fresh fruits and vegetables.

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360. The weights of the remaining goods and services are recalculated proportionally (that the sum of them should be equal to 100%). The share of regulated goods and services which are excluded is now 31.3%, of fresh fruits and vegetables – 3.2%.
  361. To organise the survey of industrial producer price indices, the reference enterprises are selected using data from state statistical reports on the volumes of products shipped by economic activities for a base period. The sampled population of reference enterprises comprises enterprises with a total volume of products shipped in value terms not less than 70% of the total volume of the products shipped for specific economic activity for the country as a whole and for the regions. The reference enterprises are sampled using the cut-off method based on the selection of, primarily, the largest enterprises. Other industrial enterprises are included in the sampled reference enterprises proportionally to the volume of products shipped for a base year.
  362. Data on industrial producer prices are collected from 26<sup>th</sup> of the previous month to 25<sup>th</sup> of the reference month and are provided by reference enterprises to state statistics bodies on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day after the reference period. The compilation of summary data on industrial producer prices is completed on the 4<sup>th</sup> of each month.
  363. To organise the survey of agricultural producer prices, reference enterprises are selected using data from state statistical reports on the volumes of products sold by economic activities for a base period. The sampled population of reference enterprises comprises enterprises with the volume of agricultural products sold not less than 70% of the total volume of its sales in value terms and which ensures geographical representation of all regions and reflects their agricultural specialty. To form the sampled population of reference enterprises in agriculture, the cut-off method is used. Primarily, large agricultural enterprises are selected, and other agricultural enterprises are included in sampled reference enterprises in agriculture proportionally to the volume of products sold for a base year.
  364. Data on agricultural producer prices are collected from 26<sup>th</sup> of the previous month to 25<sup>th</sup> of the reference month and are provided by reference enterprises to state statistics bodies on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day after the reference period.
  365. To organise the survey of freight tariffs, reference enterprises are selected using data from state statistical reports on the revenues from freight transportation for the country as a whole and by modes of transport for a base period. The sampled population of reference enterprises comprises transport enterprises with the total amount of revenues from freight transportation not less than 70% of the total revenues.
  366. Data on freight transportation tariffs by modes of transport are provided by reference enterprises to state statistics bodies on the 26<sup>th</sup> of each month. The compilation of summary data on freight transportation tariffs for all modes of transport is completed on the 30<sup>th</sup>.
  367. Methodological explanations of price statistics are published in statistical bulletins and books and are posted on the website of Belstat.
  368. Primary statistical data are entered and processed in electronic data processing systems, which enable checking for compliance with reference books and classifications used in price statistics, and for extreme values.
  369. To maintain the representativeness of the sample populations of outlets and production units and representative goods in the state statistical surveys of prices, these are updated and expanded in line with the approved instructions: annually –

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for the surveys of prices and tariffs in the consumer market and agricultural producer prices; at least once every three years – for the survey of industrial producer prices; and as necessary – for the survey of freight transportation tariffs.

370. The following data are available to users:

- weekly press releases (three times a month) ‘On the estimation of consumer price index’;
- monthly statistical bulletin ‘Price indices of consumer goods and services, industrial and agricultural products’;
- monthly express information ‘Inflation in the Republic of Belarus’ (includes price indices for chosen goods and services for the whole country as well as the breakdown by regions and Minsk City);
- monthly press releases ‘On price changes’ (on the price changes of consumer goods and services, of industrial and agricultural products); ‘On Core inflation in the Republic of Belarus’, ‘Consumer price indices in the Republic of Belarus and CIS countries’, ‘Consumer price indices in the Republic of Belarus and some countries of the world’;
- monthly, on Belstat’s website – the CPI for the full nomenclature of goods and services at the country and regional levels for different comparison periods (the summary CPI is published only for the whole country), and average prices of food and non-food goods and paid services for the whole country and by regions;
- annual data books ‘Prices in the consumer market of the Republic of Belarus’ and ‘Producer prices in the Republic of Belarus’;
- annually, on Belstat’s website – the structure of consumer expenditures for the calculation of CPI. Also the annual CPIs, PPIs, freight tariff indices, tariff indices of communication services for natural and legal persons and individual entrepreneurs, price indices and average prices on the housing market are published on Belstat’s website.

371. Indicators of consumer price indices and industrial producer price indices at the country level are included in the IMF Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS).

### **372. Assessment**

*Belstat prepares and publishes a set of price indices: Consumer Price Index, Core inflation (core CPI), Price indices and average prices on the dwelling market, Industrial Producer Price Index, Agricultural Producer Price Index, Index of tariffs for cargo transportation, Index of tariffs for communication services, Index of Parity Prices of industrial products, works and services consumed by agricultural enterprises and for the sold agricultural products.*

*The state statistical surveys of prices are organised and calculated taking into account basic recommendations and provisions of the Consumer Price Index Manual and Producer Price Index Manual prepared by ILO, IMF, OECD, Eurostat, the United Nations, IBRD, and WB in 2004. The main principles of the organisation of the statistical survey of prices are based on the methodological guidelines corresponding to international practice.*

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*The statistical information is collected and published in compliance with the timeframe specified in the annual programme of statistical work approved by the Government.*

*The Assessment team supports planned work to computerise statistical price and tariff data collection and processing. There is nevertheless an urgent need to enhance its communication and dissemination of Belstat's price statistics. Belstat should:*

*R59 Explain to non-expert users the methodological differences and distinctive purposes of the CPI and the Core CPI. Ideally both indices could be published simultaneously in one press release along with a very short methodological explanation (info-box). This would avoid any misinterpretation and misuse of these two distinct indices.*

*R60 Publish alongside weekly CPIs a short methodological description of the main conceptual differences and distinctive purposes of the weekly CPI and the monthly CPI.*

## **4.6 BUSINESS STATISTICS**

373. Most business-related statistics are produced by Belstat's 'main department of enterprise statistics' with 33 staff working on industry and innovation statistics, structural statistics, energy and environment statistics and statistics for micro, small and medium size enterprises. Other divisions across Belstat also cover certain areas of business statistics such as the service sector, banks, insurances, R&D statistics, ICT statistics, business finance statistics, industrial producer prices and these teams are not placed under the same deputy chairperson. The responsibilities for the different business statistics related areas are spread over different divisions and departments and the rationale for allocating the responsibility for this area of statistics to different divisions is not entirely evident. In case of any future reorganisation it is advisable to re-consider these responsibilities and possibly place them under the same deputy and/or groups them in one or two main departments.

### **4.6.1 Structural Business Statistics (SBS)**

374. Structural statistics, and statistics on micro and small enterprises, provide key indicators by economic activity and by local units. The basis for the surveys is the business register; registration is based on NACE rev 1.1. In total there are around: 77,000 micro and small enterprises (including individual farmers – private farms) whose share of GDP is approximately 16%; 3,000 medium enterprises; and around 5,000-6,000 big enterprises (whose share of GDP is estimated at 77-78%).

375. The criteria of defining the size of enterprises are determined in the law 'On the support to small and medium size businesses', which are different from the criteria used in the EU. Micro-enterprises employ up to 15 employees, small enterprises from 16 to 100 employees, medium enterprises from 101 to 250 employees and big enterprises more than 250 employees. Furthermore, individual entrepreneurs exist as a distinct category.

376. An exhaustive annual structural survey is implemented for all categories of enterprises (micro, small, medium and big) and an exhaustive quarterly structural survey is implemented for medium and big enterprises.

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377. Micro and small are surveyed once a year through a simplified and unified questionnaire. Each subject-matter unit of Belstat decides for which sectors of the economy an additional sub-annual survey is needed in addition to the regular annual survey. The choice of a sample or exhaustive survey depends on the economic sector – in some sectors, such as industry, trade and catering, sampling is applied. The structural survey of micro and small enterprises is complemented by information about their exports/imports and by information about farmers.
378. Data on individual entrepreneurs are either collected through some very specific annual surveys (in trade and catering) or taken from administrative sources (tax authorities).
379. Medium and big enterprises have to fill in a rather comprehensive state reporting form asking for employment data, wages and salaries, financial indicators (revenues, profit, payables and receivables), volume of production in physical and financial terms, transport of freight and passengers, investments, fixed capital, etc. This is an exhaustive survey covering all legal units. Due to the administrative status of state reporting forms for this survey and the right to impose administrative penalties, the response rate to the survey is 100%.
380. Results from all these surveys together are used to define the economic activity of the enterprise and to update it in the business register. Data are published quarterly and annually – but on a cumulative basis (that is, data are not separated by quarters but summed over the year).
381. Data collection is organised via the district and territorial bodies of statistics. Most of the surveys are based on paper questionnaires, although for small and micro enterprises electronic reporting forms are also available. District offices undertake the data collection and a first round of logical and visual quality control; the smaller district offices transfer the paper forms to the territorial office, while the larger district offices enter the data into the computer. Territorial offices enter the remaining data into the production system and implement a number of quality checks, then aggregate the data for the territory, before transmitting them to the head-quarters. Data errors are corrected at all levels and on the basis of feedback from respondents. Belstat finalises the quality control of the data, implements a number of validation procedures, adds other information from administrative sources or different departments from within Belstat and then publishes the totals with breakdowns by regions, economic activity, by type of ownership and by legal and organisational forms. Data publications appear on Belstat's website as well as on paper and on the IMF SDDS site.
382. Published data are never corrected or revised because the information basis for the data is almost exhaustive and all checks are implemented at this stage. Changes only occur if the underlying classifications or methodologies change.
383. Belstat identifies as the main areas of improvement in the future:
- the development of an approach to combine exhaustive and sample surveys of small businesses;
  - the development of business activity indicators;
  - improvements in the structural survey for profit and non-profit organisations; and
  - increasing the use of administrative data sources.

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#### 4.6.2 Short-term Business Statistics (STS)

384. Industry statistics are produced by the Main Department of enterprise statistics and 17 people work in this area (8-10 people in regional offices). They are compiled on the basis of NACE rev 1.1 for the activities and on CPA 2002 for products, both classifications being based on the European versions with national additions. The latest European classifications (NACE rev 2, CPA 2008 and latest Prodcom will be introduced with the start of the next 5 year programme.
385. 'Industry' covers the sections of mining, manufacturing, electricity, gas and water production and distribution. Data production is based on international recommendations on industrial statistics and the index of industrial production.
386. The observation unit is the legal entity and its local kind-of activity units (separate subdivisions) engaged in industrial production. The selection of observation units is based on the statistical business register. All responding units have to report on all their activities and are classified according to the main economic activity (local kind of activity unit) based on this information.
387. For industrial production three different groups of respondent units are surveyed:
- Medium and large enterprises with more than 100 and 250 employees respectively, whose main activity is industry are surveyed on a monthly basis, exhaustively. They account for around 86% of total industrial production.
  - Small and micro enterprises, engaged in industrial production and which account for around 8% of industrial production, are surveyed on a quarterly basis and sampling is applied. The sample is designed on the basis of the volume of industrial production of the previous year.
  - Industrial sub-units of non- industrial organisations whose main activity is not industrial production (such as a poultry plant being an agricultural enterprise but engaged in meat processing, which is an industrial production activity) are surveyed on a quarterly basis exhaustively. They account for around 6% of total industrial production.
388. Individual entrepreneurs, which contribute around 1% of industrial production, are not surveyed; their volume output and prices are taken into account at national account level only (adjustments are done).
389. All surveys are mainly conducted using paper questionnaires and the same processes and responsibilities for data collection, checking and validation as described above. From January 2013 electronic data collection is applied to the reporting forms on industry and business finance though on a voluntary basis.
390. The main output of the industrial statistics is the index of industrial production, calculated on a monthly basis and compared to the previous month and to the corresponding reference month of the previous year.
391. The methodology for industrial production indices has been developed by Belstat and is based on the UN recommendations (using a Laspeyres formula).
392. Revisions are based on the exhaustive annual survey data of micro, small, medium and big enterprises and while annual data are final, monthly and quarterly data are adjusted (revised). These revisions are made in July of the following year; these revised data are final, unless there are changes in methodology or classifications that require a recalculation of the data. The revision process is very much IT based and basically implemented through looking at and keeping trends for adjusting annual data.

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393. Data are published on the website of Belstat and also in various paper publications and on the IMF SDDS site. The link to the IMF SDDS is given under a special heading of the Belstat website (Standards/IMF SDDS/National Summary data page' but it not provided close to the data itself.
  394. Belstat indicates that its development projects for the next years will focus on: the introduction of separate (distinct, discrete) data for months and quarters (the questionnaire will not ask for cumulative data anymore); seasonal adjustment for monthly indices of industrial production; and the introduction and backward calculation of the indices based on NACE rev 2.
  395. Construction statistics covers statistics of investment in fixed capital and construction and are compiled by 20 staff in Belstat's main department of investment and construction statistics. 10 people work on investment and construction statistics divisions in the main statistical departments of each region and Minsk City.
  396. Classifications used are NACE rev 1.1 and several national classifications on units of measurement, property forms, regional structures, government institutions and others.
  397. All medium and big enterprises engaged in investment activities fill in monthly reporting forms while all micro and small enterprises fill in reporting forms either on a monthly (those that are state organisations) or quarterly basis (those implementing construction activities for building private houses and implementing major investment projects). While sub-annual forms are shorter and cover only main variables (such as investment purpose and sources of financing for the investments), the annual survey covers all variables. Data collection is mostly implemented by the territorial offices except if a respondent has construction/investment activities in several regions of the country, in which case the data are sent to the territorial office in Minsk. In 2013 electronic reporting will be introduced.
  398. Territorial offices control the primary data in terms of completeness, logics, outliers, consistency with data from previous periods, classifications used and corresponding data from registers. Data are transferred to Belstat where the final output data tables are produced and published in different breakdowns (regional, kind of activity, property forms, sources of financing, etc.).
  399. Revisions are based on changes in the primary data (due to mistakes, changes in the accounting of various transactions, etc.) and while annual data are final, monthly and quarterly data are adjusted (revised). These revisions are made in May of the following year; these revised data are final, unless there are changes in methodology or classifications that require a recalculation of the data.
  400. The methodology is based on UN recommendations from 1997 about construction statistics as further specified by Belstat and covers instructions for filling the reporting forms for all types of enterprises and the methodology for calculating the volume indices for investment and construction works.
  401. Belstat indicates that its development projects for the next years will focus on: further improvements of the methodology (although the UN recommendations for the methodology do not change very often) and data collection software, reduction of burden on respondents through reviewing the reporting forms and deleting unnecessary variables, improving the quality of statistical processes and the coverage of the data.

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402. Trade statistics covers retail and wholesale trade and are compiled by 10 staff in the main department of trade statistics (which also includes 13 staff who produce external trade statistics). Staff in regional offices work on both sets of statistics simultaneously.
  403. Classifications used are NACE rev 1.1 and several national classifications on units of measurement, property forms, regional structures, government institutions and others.
  404. Sources of information are data from statistical surveys and reporting forms, and data from the Ministry of Taxes (for the number of individual entrepreneurs engaged in trade activities). Data are collected by the territorial bodies and always refer to the location of where the trade activity took place (not the location of the legal entity). For the coverage data are collected from all entities/enterprises/organisations involved in trade activities (trade meaning trading in shops, at markets, in public organisations, catering places, canteens, etc.). Both exhaustive and sampling surveys are used.
  405. All small, medium and big enterprises belonging to the state sector of the economy and being engaged in retail trade fill in monthly reporting forms (there are around 7000 of them) while small, medium and big enterprises belonging to the private sector of the economy and being engaged in the retail trade are sampled on a monthly basis. The sample size is 15% of the enterprises covering around 40% of the turnover of these enterprises. All enterprises (around 27000 legal units) that are engaged in trade activities, individual entrepreneurs and all organisations selling goods through state organisations are providing annual reporting forms. Markets are covered through quarterly sampling surveys in February, April, May and October on working days and free days while their monthly results are calculated on the basis of expert estimates.
  406. For the wholesale trade all big, medium and small enterprises that have wholesale trade as main activity (1500 enterprises) fill in reporting forms on a monthly basis. Micro enterprises (more than 11000) are sampled on a monthly basis, with 20% of them covered delivering around 70% of the turnover. For those big and medium enterprises that have wholesale trade as secondary activity reporting forms are filled in on a quarterly basis while micro and small enterprises fill in forms on an annual basis. For individual enterprises the list of enterprises is received from the tax administration and data are calculated based on expert estimates.
  407. It is planned to introduce electronic data reporting for all categories of enterprises but not for individual enterprises.
  408. Local offices collect all the data, enter them into the PC and implement primary control over the data. Territorial offices implement data collection as well and control all data in terms of completeness, logics, outliers, consistency with data from previous periods and classifications used. Data are transferred to Belstat where data are finally checked and final output data tables are produced and published in different breakdowns.
  409. Revisions are based on changes in the primary data and a better coverage of annual data then sub-annual data and while annual data are final, monthly and quarterly data are adjusted (revised). These revisions are made in May of the following year; these revised data are final, unless there are changes in methodology or classifications that require a recalculation of the data.



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410. The methodology is based on UN recommendations from 2008 about retail and wholesale trade statistics and on methodological recommendations from CISSTAT as further specified by Belstat.
  411. Belstat indicates that its development projects for the next years will focus on: improving the methodology in line with international standards, and implementing a survey on products sold by micro enterprises and individual entrepreneurs.
  412. Services statistics covers all sections of NACE G-Q and had recently been started (in 2011) when the change from statistics on charged services to the people towards real service statistics was implemented.
  413. This work is implemented by 2 staff out of 9 working in the main department of services statistics. In each Main Statistical Department of the regions and Minsk city one person is engaged in trade statistics (as well as working in other statistical areas).
  414. A list of indicators is being developed since 2011 and is still work in progress also linked to the fact that the government has planned to increase the share of services in the GDP to more than 50% by 2015. Service statistics produces economic indicators reflecting the sector of services but also volume indicators, such as the value added from the service sector, volume of services provided, the volume of charged services, investments, effectiveness, profit and losses, export and import of services, wages and salaries, price indices, number of service enterprises in health, education, communication, transport, etc.
  415. As all of the data are collected by other departments the work on compiling statistics on the service sector is a cross-department project using available data to reflect the development in a particular sector of the economy. Starting from 2011, the statistical bulletin 'Services sector in the Republic of Belarus' has been published on a quarterly basis. In 2012 for the first time the statistical book 'Services sector in the Republic of Belarus' was produced.
  416. Belstat indicates that its development projects for the next years will focus on the improvement of the system of statistical indicators characterising services sector, with the move to the sample survey of micro entities.
  417. Transport statistics are compiled by the transport, communication and ICT statistics division (as a part of the main department of services and demographic statistics) which has 6 staff. In each Main Statistical Department of the regions and Minsk city there are 1-2 persons engaged in transport statistics (as well as other statistical domains). These statistics cover transport by railway, pipelines, cars, trams, buses, subways, inland rivers and air.
  418. Transport statistics are based on NACE rev 1.1.
  419. Data sources are centralised state reporting forms collected by Belstat, de-centralised reporting and administrative data from the Ministry of Transport and administrative data from the Ministry of Interior (mainly the number of cars and road accidents).
  420. Reporting units are legal units with transport as the main or secondary activity for all modes of transport.
  421. Monthly reporting forms are collected for car, inland river, air and pipeline transport from all big and medium enterprises (for tube transport there are only four respondents while for air transport there are nine respondents). Quarterly reporting forms are collected for car, inland river and air transport from big and medium enterprises but also from small and micro enterprises with transport as

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- their main activity. Annual reporting forms are collected for car transport in particular from small and micro enterprises, on an exhaustive basis. For individual entrepreneurs imputations are made.
422. For all kinds of transport passenger and freight transport data are collected. Freight transport and turnover data for car, rail, pipeline, inland water and air transport are produced on a monthly basis. Passenger transport and turnover data for car, rail, inland water and air transport are compiled on a monthly basis while for internal city transport (tram, buses and subway transport) data are compiled on a quarterly basis. Financial indicators for all kinds of transport statistics are compiled on a quarterly basis.
  423. Territorial offices collect and control the primary data in terms of completeness, logics, outliers, consistency with data from previous periods, classifications used and corresponding data from registers. Data are transferred to Belstat where the final output data tables are produced and published in different breakdowns.
  424. Revisions are based on changes in the primary data and while annual data are final, monthly and quarterly data are adjusted (revised). These revisions are made in May of the following year; these revised data are final, unless there are changes in methodology or classifications that require a recalculation of the data.
  425. The methodology is based on the UN recommendations – glossary for transport statistics, the 4<sup>th</sup> version of 2010/2011.
  426. Belstat indicates that its development projects for the next years will focus on: developing sample surveys and new methods to assess the performance of transport operators, with a particular focus on individual entrepreneurs and micro-enterprises.
  427. Tourism statistics are compiled by the Main department of services and demography statistics which has 29 staff and employs one staff member dedicated to tourism statistics. In each Main Statistical Department of the regions and Minsk city there is one person engaged in tourism statistics (as well as other statistical activities).
  428. NACE rev 1.1 and the classification of types of accommodation are used.
  429. Data sources are state reporting forms and administrative data from the Ministry of taxes, especially regarding the eco-type of tourism as well as administrative data from the Committee of border services on international tourism. Reporting units for organised tourism are legal units and local kind of activity units with an activity in tourism. Reporting units for accommodation facilities are legal entities and local kind-of-activity units providing accommodation services of all kinds. The reporting covers all units engaged in tourism activities, accommodation facilities regardless of this being the main or secondary activity, of the ownership type and the number of employees and is implemented on an annual basis.
  430. Data are collected for incoming, outgoing and internal tourism. They are used to compile indicators on the number of enterprises with tourism as an activity, number of tourists, prices of organised tourism tours, tourist flows, characteristics of travels and number of employees as well as indicators on the number of accommodation facilities, capacity of these facilities, number of persons accommodated, number of overnight stays, profit on an annual basis. International tourism is compiled on the basis of de-centralised state reporting forms from the Committee of border services on a quarterly basis.

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431. Territorial offices collect and control the primary data in terms of completeness, logics, outliers, consistency with data from previous periods and classifications used. Data are transferred to Belstat where the final output data tables are produced. Belstat publishes a wide range of data by different breakdowns (territory, property types, countries).
  432. Revisions are based on changes in the primary data and while annual data are final, monthly and quarterly data are adjusted (revised). These revisions are made in May of the following year; these revised data are final, unless there are changes in methodology or classifications that require a recalculation of the data.
  433. It is based on some rather old international recommendations from the UN from 1993 and selected concepts of a newer international recommendation from 2008.
  434. Belstat indicates that its development projects for the next years will focus on: implementing in full the international recommendations on tourism statistics from 2008, developing tourist satellite accounts, developing statistics on individual tourism and developing estimations to cover tourists and transit via open borders.
  435. Energy statistics are compiled by the department of energy and environment statistics (part of the Main department of enterprise statistics) by 6 staff, and 3-4 people in each regional statistical office. The topic has gained a specific political importance due to the energy dependency of Belarus from foreign suppliers and hence an increased focus on energy efficiency. Apart from Belstat also the Department for energy efficiency of the State Committee for Standards collects data on heat and electricity rates for the production of the most energy-intensive products as well as on the results of energy saving measures.
  436. Classifications used are the standard international energy classification, NACE rev 1.1 and CPA 2002.
  437. Monthly, quarterly and annual surveys are implemented in energy statistics covering big and medium state and private enterprises – consumers of electricity and fuels, small enterprises consuming fuel, enterprises – producers and enterprises trading with fuel and electricity. Through monthly surveys data are collected from small, medium and big state enterprises, and big and medium private enterprises, on the consumption of fuel and energy are collected. Data are also collected from the monopoly enterprise ‘Gazprom transgaz Belarus’ producing and trading with oil and gas, and from big and medium enterprises consuming fuel and coal and selling coal to households. Through a quarterly survey on inventories of fuel data from small, medium and large state enterprises, and medium and large private enterprises, are collected. Annual surveys collect data on the consumption on energy for the production of goods. All surveys are exhaustive and data produced are cumulative.
  438. Territorial offices collect and control the primary data in terms of completeness, logics, outliers, consistency with data from previous periods and classifications used. Data are transferred to Belstat where the final output data tables are produced and published in different breakdowns. Monthly (simplified version) and annual (full version) energy balances are published on the website and in paper publications.
  439. Revisions are made once a year in July, when more complete data are available with annual data being fixed and monthly and quarterly data being revised on the basis of revised primary data sources.

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440. Energy statistics are compiled on the basis of international recommendations from the UN, Eurostat and the latest OECD/IEA/Eurostat manual on energy statistics from 2011.
  441. Belstat indicates that its development projects for the next years will focus on: improving compliance with international standards, development of new reporting forms to better cover consumption of energy by different groups of consumers, production of final energy consumption data, and indicators of energy efficiency.

#### **4.6.3 Business finance statistics**

442. Business finance statistics are implemented by the main department on finance statistics employing 22 staff in Belstat and another 76 staff in the 7 territorial bodies of statistics and a number of staff in the district offices.
443. Business finance statistics includes the collection of data on the financial results of the enterprises, their financial conditions, assets and liabilities; and the status of the accounts. In short it is about the collection of data from the accounts. The relevance of such a data collection to official statistics, or the integration of these data requests into other surveys, is to be reviewed.
444. Apart from Belstat a number of institutions are involved in the collection of these data – such as the National Bank, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Ministry of Economy, and the State Property Commission.
445. Monthly, quarterly and annual reporting forms are completed by large enterprises, medium-sized enterprises, small state-owned enterprises. Annual reporting forms are completed by small enterprises of non-state ownership and by micro enterprises. Whereas the first 3 groups of enterprises receive 3 different reporting forms the last one only receives one form once per year. The necessity of 3 different form sent to the same enterprises was not very evident but apparently enterprises prefer this approach.
446. Data collection is organised via the district and territorial bodies of statistics. Most of the surveys are based on paper questionnaires, although for small and micro enterprises electronic reporting forms are also available. Statistics divisions in districts districts (towns) collect the reports and carry out a first round of visual control for the completeness and accuracy of the report and then transfer the data to the territorial bodies; some statistical divisions enter the data into the computer and undertake arithmetic and logical controls. Territorial offices undertake data entry, integrate data and implement a number of quality checks and corrections, then aggregate the data for the territory, before transmitting them to the headquarters. Territorial bodies also compile and disseminate summary data for the region. Data errors are corrected at all levels and on the basis of feedback from respondents. Belstat coordinates all these activities, finalises the quality control of the data, implements a number of validation procedures, checks, analyses and compiles the data and then publishes the data on its website as well as in paper publications.
447. Belstat indicates that its development projects for the next years will focus on: adaptation of finance statistics to the new accounting and reporting standards, the introduction of the IFRS for joint stock companies, listed companies and foreign-owned companies; and the introduction of national IFRS based standards for all other enterprises.

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**448. Assessment – Business statistics**

*Overall the area of business statistics seems to be very oriented towards the system of a planned economy with a significant number of reporting forms to be completed by all enterprises, and very few sample surveys. The Assessment team thinks that as a priority Belstat should:*

*R61 Introduce more electronic data reporting and collection.*

*R62 Review the list of data and variables collected.*

*As the number of small enterprises increases and forms of property change, Belstat should:*

*R63 Embark on a comprehensive transformation project towards a system of structural and short-term business statistics, reflecting this development of the economy in an appropriate way and at a proper timing.*

#### **4.7 AGRICULTURE STATISTICS**

449. About 10% of the gross value added of the Republic of Belarus is derived from agricultural activity.
450. Belstat's Main Department of Agricultural and Forestry Statistics (17 specialists) is responsible for the preparation of statistics about agricultural crops and livestock production. Belstat covers all areas of agriculture statistics. District divisions undertake the data collection and a first logical and visual control, 10 specialists in every region (9 specialists in the Brest region) are responsible for the collection, processing, aggregation, accumulation, storage, protection and evaluation of statistical data on agriculture and forestry statistics on the basis of a common statistical methodology.
451. Agricultural data are derived from surveys and administrative sources. The National Statistical Committee of the Republic of Belarus is responsible for centralised state statistical observations; The Ministry of Agriculture and Food of the Republic of Belarus, The Ministry of Forestry of the Republic of Belarus, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus are responsible for decentralised state statistical observations.
452. Data from administrative sources are used to compile a selected number of indicators. Data are taken from the annual accounting statements of agriculture enterprises (from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food) and from the State Committee for Property on land use.
453. Agriculture statistics covers data on crops production (cereal crops, potatoes, vegetables and melons, fruits and berries, forage and other agricultural crops) and animal husbandry (analysis of livestock and poultry, and the production of meat, milk and eggs). Gross agricultural output is made of the value of animal husbandry and crop growing in farms of all categories, and the change in the value of work-in-progress in crop growing. Estimation of gross agricultural output is performed in accordance with Belstat's approved methodologies for calculating gross agricultural output at constant and current prices. These methodologies are informed by recommendations of the Statistical Committee of CIS, Eurostat, and the FAO.

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454. The observation of the activity of agricultural organisations and private farms is conducted on the following basis:
- Agricultural enterprises and private farms with agricultural land area of 300 and more hectares and (or) livestock number 100 or more heads submit information according to forms of state statistical reporting with annual, monthly and other periodicity.
  - Agricultural enterprises and private farms with agricultural land area less than 300 hectares and private farms with livestock number less than 100 heads, and micro enterprises submit information once a year.
  - Sample survey of personal land plots of permanent rural residents are conducted on a monthly basis.
455. The compilation and submission of information to users takes place on a monthly and quarterly basis. The terms of data submission are determined in the annual programme of statistical work.
456. Agricultural enterprises and farmers, in accordance with forms of state statistical observations, submit the statistical data. Both diaries kept by households and interviews are used for the surveys of personal land plots of individuals. Quality control of data includes arithmetical and logical control, control of the correspondence with the allowance limits, and the identification of extreme and missing values. Requirements for arithmetical and logical control of all indicators are provided in the instructions on filling out relevant forms of statistical reporting, and relevant software systems, for data processing. The examination of primary data, which come from respondents on paper, takes place automatically in the process of input into the software system. When erroneous data are identified, the correction takes place only after discussion with the respondent, and the resubmission of data. The control of the values on correspondence with the allowance limits also takes place automatically in software system after the input of the primary data. There is a limit set for controlled statistical indicators. Values above the limit are considered erroneous, although small deviations from the set limits can take place. In case of significant deviations, again, the correction takes place only after discussion with the respondent, and the resubmission of data. Editing of extreme, missing values also takes place only after the submission of the data by the respondent. Control of output data is provided in data processing systems.
457. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food provides annual accounting reports of agricultural organisations for agricultural output calculation. The State Property Committee provides data on land availability by land users. Agriculture producers to be included into the surveys are selected using the statistical register.
458. After receiving annual data (for the calculation of indices of physical volume of agricultural production), the short-term database for the previous year is re-calculated.
459. In the process of publishing statistical data in all statistical publications it is indicated for what period the data are preliminary and that the data may be revised in future editions.
460. Statistical information is provided to the users in the 'Agriculture in the Republic of Belarus' book, and via express-information, statistical bulletins and press-releases. Statistical information is disseminated on the official web-site of Belstat.

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Statistical information is provided to international organisations, and the statistical offices of other countries.

461. The publication of statistical data is accompanied with short comments of a methodological nature about the components of the statistical indicators. Methodological explanations are also provided on the official web-site of Belstat.

**462. Assessment**

*Belstat's agricultural statistics appear to be sufficiently broad in scope and detail to meet the needs of users, and are produced in accordance with international standards.*

*The assessment team thinks that Belstat should:*

*R64 Participate in World Agricultural Census Programmes in order to improve agriculture statistics; and develop an appropriate strategic plan.*

## **4.8 SERVICE (EDUCATION AND HEALTH) STATISTICS**

### **4.8.1 Context**

463. In relation to Education and Health statistics, Belstat – which is primarily interested in ‘education’ and ‘health’ as services in the context of the measurement of the economy – works closely with the Ministry of Education the Ministry of Health – which are focused on policy, delivery and standards.
464. Belstat's Main Department of Service and Demographic Statistics comprises 29 people, of 2 work on education and 1 on health. A further 2 people work on education and health statistics in each main Main Statistical Department of the regions and Minsk City; in addition, District Statistics Divisions are involved in the collection, checking, aggregation and supply of data on education relating to organisations in their area.

### **4.8.2 Education statistics**

465. The Ministry of Education compiles information from schools and other educational establishments (except at postgraduate levels) on fourteen forms (state statistical observations); the information is collected by district executive (education) committees, and is aggregated by their regional equivalents before being passed to the Ministry – which publishes a suite of information relating to each individual educational establishment. The information that the Ministry collects is primarily used for monitoring and other administrative purposes; the statistical use is secondary.
466. Belstat compiles information about postgraduate education and the education of children in recreational camps on two forms. Data on postgraduate education are compiled at the regional and national levels; data on recreational camps at district, regional and national levels. At each production stage data from these two forms are checked and aggregated. Data at the level of the organisation are transmitted from district to region and region to Belstat. In addition, the Ministry of Education provides Belstat with the data that it has collected via 14 decentralised forms. Belstat then publishes statistical aggregates drawing on all 16 forms, in a variety

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of books and bulletins, including via the website, at the national level, and at the regional and district level.

467. Forms of the Ministry of Education cover all institutions in the public and private sectors. Data on enrolment, intake and graduation of specialists from secondary specialised, higher and postgraduate educational institutions are used by the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Economy, and the State Committee for Science and Technology to forecast the volumes and structure of training in secondary specialised and higher educational institutions, to plan the needs of the economy and society for such specialists, to plan funding and to control the training of highly qualified researchers.

### **4.8.3 Health statistics**

468. The Ministry of Health compiles information from state-sponsored (public sector) organisations that are licensed to carry out medical activity – clinics, hospitals and so on. It uses 22 forms (state statistical observations); the information is collected by district executive (health) committees, and is aggregated by their regional equivalents before being passed to the Ministry – which publishes a suite of information relating to each individual state-sponsored health service provider. The information that the Ministry collects is primarily used for monitoring and other administrative purposes; the statistical use is secondary.
469. Belstat compiles information about medical/pharmaceutical workers; organisations providing outpatient and polyclinic care having specialised departments (rooms); numbers of visits to, and by, doctors; hospital bed capacity; and disease incidence from private sector health service providers on two forms, which are collected and checked at the regional level. Data are then aggregated and passed to Belstat. In addition, the Ministry of Health provides Belstat with the aggregated data that it has collected. Belstat then publishes statistical aggregates drawing on all 24 forms – that is, aggregates covering both public and private providers of health services – in a variety of books and bulletins, including via the website, at the national level, and at the regional and district level.
470. All of the state statistical observations are annual, and are exhaustive; that is, they cover all relevant establishments.

### **471. Assessment**

*Whilst there is no suggestion of substantive problems in the fields of health or education statistics, it does not seem efficient to have two organisations collecting information about each topic. The Assessment team considers that Belstat should:*

*R65 Review the responsibilities of Belstat and the health and education Ministries with a view to developing a clearer, more efficient system of collecting and processing data; make appropriate legal changes as necessary.*

*In conducting such a review it would be appropriate to consider whether it is appropriate for Ministries to be collecting information, the primary use of which is administrative in nature, via 'state statistical observations'.*



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## 4.9 SOCIAL PROTECTION STATISTICS

472. Social protection statistics are compiled by the Main Department of Services and Demographic Statistics, where 1 person is engaged in social protection statistics. The social protection statistics are compiled at the country level.
473. Social protection indicators cover three main topics, and statistical sources:
- The state social assistance and payments system. There are three main aspects of this system:
    - Pension provision – collected via a Ministry of Labour and Social Protection statistical observation, and the same Ministry’s administrative data.
    - Social benefits and targeted social assistance – the Ministry of Labour’s administrative data.
    - Data about the state social service and social assistance institutions – two decentralised observations operated by the Ministry of Labour, three by the Ministry of Education, and one by the Ministry of Health.
  - Organisations’ (employers’) expenditure on the social protection of their employees – Belstat collects data biannually using a state statistical reporting form (statistical observation) on the composition of the wage fund and other payments.
  - Households’ receipt of benefits and in-kind allowances – data on benefits, allowances and payments are collected on Belstat’s quarterly household income and expenditure survey.
474. The statistics are reported in ‘Socio-economic situation of Belarus’, ‘Number of pensioners and average pension amount; data on social service institutions’. They are also published on the website. The main areas for improvement identified by Belstat relate to the dissemination of the statistics. The Assessment team was told that as electronic data reporting is introduced, the Ministries state statistical observations will be formally replaced by the use of administrative data.
475. The Assessment team recommends that Belstat should:
- R66 Explore the feasibility of incorporating the ESSPROS standards into the collection and reporting of social protection statistics.

## 4.10 ENVIRONMENTAL STATISTICS

476. Two persons within the Department of Energy and Environment Statistics of the Main Department of Enterprise Statistics work with environmental statistics. In addition, statistics are produced by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection and other government authorities (based upon administrative data).
477. Managerial and methodological approaches to collecting and organising environmental statistics data are based on principles stated in the next international documents:
- Framework for the Development of Environment Statistics (ST/ESA/STAT/SER.M/78);
  - Concepts and Methods of Environment Statistics (UN 1988);
  - Standard Statistical Classification of Ambient Air Quality (CES/667);
  - Standard Statistical Classification of Water Use (CES/636);

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- Concepts and methods of environment statistics (UN, 1992);
  - Glossary of Environment Statistics (UN, 1997);
  - Single European Standard Statistical Classification of Environmental Protection Facilities and Expenditures (CES/6822);
  - Environmental indicators and indicator-based assessment reports: Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia (UNECE, 2007).
478. As far as the Assessment team could determine, environmental statistics comply with international standards and classifications.
479. Statistics are based on both forms of statistical reporting (centralised and decentralised) and administrative data on properties, agriculture and forestry. There is a system of key environmental indicators covering air pollution and ozone depletion, climate change, water, biodiversity, agriculture, energy, transport and waste. Belstat compiles statistics on air pollution from stationary sources, as well as estimates of environmental protection expenditure. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection calculates emissions from mobile sources, water resources, and statistics on industrial waste. Statistics on natural resources cover minerals, oil and gas in addition to figures about agriculture and forestry.
480. Environmental statistics are presented in several annual publications, and provided annually to international organisations.
481. Belstat is planning to carry out a new pilot survey of environmental expenditure and to develop a methodology for the compilation of statistical indicators for environmental accounts; this latter planned development is particularly ambitious.

**482. Assessment**

*Belstat collects and disseminates a broad range of environmental statistics, with the support of several ministries, although the resources in this area appear to be limited. The cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources seems to be functioning well.*

*One issue raised with the Assessment team was the responsibility of Belstat in this area in relation to other authorities. The coordination task of the statistical authority comprises quality control.*

*Plans for developing environmental accounts are ambitious, and it will be important to follow a step by step strategy, taking limited resources into account.*

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#### **4.11 STATISTICS OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES**

483. Two people within the Main Department of Service and Demographic Statistics work with ICT statistics.
484. The annual statistical survey on information and communication technology covers for-profit organisations (except small business entities) with specific economic activities, and also small organisations whose principal economic activity is in the ICT sector. The survey of ICT use by government organisations has a quarterly periodicity. Data on ICT use by the population are collected once a year within the framework of the household living standards survey. Statistics in this area are based on international standards and classifications; they are presented in several publications.
485. Plans for the development and improvement of ICT statistics (specified in the Strategy for the Development of State Statistics of the Republic of Belarus for the period until 2015) include the development of the system of statistical indicators describing ICT development, and the elaboration of methodological provisions on ICT statistics.

#### **486. Assessment**

*There was not a separate discussion on ICT statistics during the mission but, as far as the Assessment team could determine from the documentation, the area seems to be sufficiently well developed given the rather limited resources available.*

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## **5. ANNEXES**

Annex 1: Agenda of the 1<sup>st</sup> mission

Annex 2: Agenda of the 2<sup>nd</sup> mission

Annex 3: Persons met during assessment missions

Annex 4: Law on Official Statistics of the Republic of Belarus (Belstat)

**AGENDA**

National Statistical System of the Republic of Belarus

Adapted Global Assessment

1<sup>st</sup> mission, October 22-28, 2012

**Assessment team**

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Eurostat:	Ms. Claudia Junker
ICON-experts:	Mr. Richard Laux – leading expert Ms. Bronislava Kaminskiene – short-term expert
UNECE:	Mr. Gabriel Gamez
EFTA:	Mr. Hans Viggo Sabo

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**Day 1: Monday, October 22, 2012**

10:30 - 11:30	Meeting with the top management of Belstat Discussion of mission objectives, tasks and work programme	Assessment Team, Top management of Belstat
11:30 - 13:00	In-depth review of legislation Presentation (max 30 minutes) by Belstat on the legal framework of the national statistical system, followed by questions and discussion	Assessment Team, Belstat
13:00 - 14:00	<i>Lunch</i>	
14:00 - 16:00	In-depth review of the structure of the national statistical system and organisation of the state statistical activities Presentation (max 30 minutes) by Belstat on the structure of the national statistical system, main tasks, planning of state statistical activities, followed by questions and discussion	Assessment Team, Belstat
16:00 - 16:20	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
16:20 - 18:00	In-depth review of the financing issues of Belstat Presentation (max 30 minutes) by Belstat on budgetary funding including information on budget allocations for the implementation of statistical works programme, followed by questions and discussion	Assessment Team, Belstat

**Day 2: Tuesday, October 23, 2012**

09:30 - 11:30	In-depth review of the organisation and conducting of state statistical surveys Presentation (max 30 minutes) by Belstat regarding the procedure of the development of statistical tools and its improvement, collection and processing of primary statistical data, receiving administrative data, followed by questions and discussion	Assessment Team, Belstat
11:30 - 11:50	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
11:50 - 13:00	In-depth review of dissemination / communication, relations with main users Presentation (max 30 minutes) by Belstat, followed by questions and discussion	Assessment Team, Belstat
13:00 - 14:00	<i>Lunch</i>	
14:00 - 16:00	In-depth review of the quality issues in statistics Presentation (max 30 minutes) on the development of quality management system, prospects, quality assessment of statistical data, followed by questions and discussion	Assessment Team, Belstat
16:00 - 16:20	<i>Coffee Break</i>	
16:20 - 18:00	In-depth review of IT-infrastructure Presentation (max 30 minutes) by Belstat on the infrastructure of IT and software tools, role in data collection and processing and in dissemination of results, followed by questions and discussion	Assessment Team I, Belstat

16:20 - 17:10	Staff development Presentation (max 30 minutes) by Belstat on the on issues of recruiting, development and training of staff, work with young specialists, followed by questions and discussion	Assessment Team II, Belstat
17:10 - 18:00	Meeting with junior staff Questions and discussion	Assessment Team II, Belstat
<b>Day 3: Wednesday, October 24, 2012</b>		
09:30 - 10:00	Review of the international cooperation Presentation (max 10 minutes) and general discussion within the framework of preparation to the meeting with international organisations and UN programmes	Assessment Team I, Belstat
10:00 - 11:00	Meeting with country offices of international organisations: IMF, The World Bank, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF Discussion on the role of statistics in monitoring capacity building programmes; open discussion on ongoing and planned technical cooperation projects in the field of statistics	Assessment Team I, representatives of international organisations, Belstat
09:30 - 11:00	In-depth review of statistical register Presentation (max 30 minutes) by Belstat on the statistical register, followed by questions and discussion	Assessment Team II, Belstat
11:00 - 11:20	<i>Coffee break</i>	
11:20 - 13:00	Meeting with users of official statistics – mass media representatives Open discussion and questions	Assessment Team I, mass media representatives, Belstat
11:20 - 13:00	In-depth review of statistical classifications Presentation (max 30 minutes) by Belstat on the classifications used in statistical activity, followed by questions and discussion	Assessment Team II, Belstat
13:00 - 14:00	<i>Lunch</i>	
14:00 - 15:30	Review of the national accounts Presentation (max 20 minutes) by Belstat on the national accounts statistics, followed by questions and discussion, including the use of administrative data	Assessment Team, representatives of the Ministry of Finance and the National Bank, Belstat
15:30 - 16:30	Review of the balance of payments statistics Presentation (max 10 minutes) by the National Bank, questions and discussion	Assessment Team II, representatives of the National Bank, Belstat
15:30 - 16:30	Meeting with representatives of the Presidential Administration (under planning)	Assessment Team I, Belstat
16:30 - 16:50	<i>Coffee break</i>	

16:50 - 18:00	Meeting with users of official statistics Presentation (max 10 minutes), open discussion with the representatives of the national and regional government authorities, research community; questions	Assessment Team, representatives of Government and research community, Belstat
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**Day 4: Thursday, October 25, 2012**

09:30 - 11:00	Review of structural business statistics Presentation (max 10 minutes) by Belstat, followed by questions and discussion	Assessment Team II, Belstat
09:30 - 11:00	Review of sample household living standards survey Presentation (max 10 minutes) by Belstat, questions and discussion	Assessment Team I Belstat
<i>11:00 - 11:20</i>	<i>Coffee break</i>	
11:20 - 12:30	Review of the short-term statistics Presentation (max 10 minutes each) by Belstat on industry and business finance, questions and discussion	Assessment Team II Belstat
11:20 - 12:30	Review of price statistics Presentation (max 10 minutes) by Belstat, questions and discussion	Assessment Team I, Belstat
<i>12:30 - 13:30</i>	<i>Lunch</i>	
13:30 - 14:30	Review of agriculture statistics Presentation (max 10 minutes) by Belstat, questions and discussion	Assessment Team II, Belstat
13:30 - 14:30	Review of labour market statistics Presentation (max 10 minutes) by Belstat, questions and discussion	Assessment Team I, Belstat
14:30 - 16:00	Review of environment statistics Presentation (max 10 minutes) by Belstat, questions and discussion with participation of other data producers – Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus	Assessment Team II, representatives of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Belstat
14:30 - 16:00	Review of services statistics (education and health) Presentation (max 10 minutes each) by Belstat, questions and discussion with participation of other data producers – Ministry of Health of the Republic of Belarus and Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus	Assessment Team I, representatives of the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education, Belstat
<i>16:00 - 16:20</i>	<i>Coffee break</i>	
16:20 - 18:00	Review of the external trade in goods statistics Presentation (max 20 minutes) by Belstat, questions and discussion with the participation of the administrative data provider – State Border Committee	Assessment Team II, representatives of the State Border Committee, Belstat



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<p>16:20 - 18:00    Review of demographic statistics  Presentation (max 20 minutes) by Belstat, questions and discussion with the participation of the administrative data providers: Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Internal Affairs</p>	<p>Assessment Team I,  Representatives of the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Internal Affairs,  Belstat</p>
<p>Meeting with representatives of regional statistics – regional level  Visiting of the Main Statistical Department of Mogilev region  Presentation (max 30 minutes) about the role and functions of regional statistical offices in the statistical production, followed by questions and discussions</p>	<p>Assessment Team,  Main Statistical Department of Mogilev region  Belstat</p>
<p>Lunch</p>	
<p>Meeting with representatives of regional statistics – district level  Visiting of a district office of the Main Statistical Department of Mogilev region  Questions and discussions</p>	<p>Assessment Team,  Main Statistical Department of Mogilev region  Belstat</p>
<p>Return to Minsk</p>	
<p>Final meeting with the top management of Belstat, presenting of the preliminary results and summarising</p>	<p>Assessment Team,  management of Belstat</p>

**Agenda**

National Statistical System of the Republic of Belarus

Adapted Global Assessment

2<sup>nd</sup> mission, March 20-22, 2013

**Assessment team**

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Eurostat: Claudia Junker

ICON expert: Richard Laux

UNECE: Gabriel Gamez

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## Day 1: Wednesday, 20 March 2013

09:00 - 11:45	<b>Meeting with the senior management</b> <i>Discussion of the draft report, aims, objectives and agenda of the 2<sup>nd</sup> mission</i>	Assessment team (RL, GG, CJ) management of Belstat
11:45 - 12:00	<i>Coffee break</i>	
12:00 - 13:00	<b>In-depth review of the legal framework of the population census</b> <i>Presentation by Belstat (max 20 min), questions and discussions</i>	Assessment team (RL, GG, CJ) Belstat
13:00 - 14:00	<i>Lunch break</i>	
14:00 - 14:45	<b>Additional review of financial and human resources of Belstat</b> <i>Presentation by Belstat (max 20 min), questions and discussions</i>	Assessment team (RL, GG, CJ) Belstat
14:45 - 15:45	<b>Social protection statistics</b> <i>Presentation by Belstat (max 20 min), questions and discussions</i>	Assessment team (RL, GG, CJ) Belstat, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
15:45 - 17:00	<b>Additional review of financial and human resources of Belstat (continued)</b>	
17:10 - 18:00	<b>Review of the Mass Media Law, its relation to official statistics</b> <i>Presentation by Belstat (max 15 min), questions and discussions</i>	Assessment team (RL, GG, CJ) Belstat

## Day 2: Thursday, 21 March 2013

09:15 - 11:15	<b>Additional review of IT infrastructure of the statistical system including presentation on functions and prospects of Minsk regional computing centre</b> <i>Presentations by Belstat (max 15 min each), questions and discussions</i>	Assessment team (RL, GG, CJ) Belstat, CCs
11:15 - 11:30	<i>Coffee break</i>	
11:30 - 12:00	<b>IT continued</b>	
12:00 - 13:00	<b>Additional session on macroeconomic statistics (NA)</b>	Assessment team (RL, GG) Belstat
12:00 - 13:00	<b>In-depth review of construction statistics</b> <i>Presentation by Belstat (max 30 min), questions and discussions</i>	Assessment team (CJ) Belstat
13:00 - 14:00	<i>Lunch break</i>	
14:00 - 15:30	<b>Additional session on macroeconomic statistics</b>	Assessment team

	<b>(external trade, business register)</b>	(RL, GG) Belstat
14:00 - 14:45	<b>In-depth review of domestic trade statistics</b> <i>Presentation by Belstat (max 30 min), questions and discussions</i>	Assessment team (CJ) Belstat
14:45 - 15:30	<b>In-depth review of energy statistics</b> <i>Presentation by Belstat (max 20 min), questions and discussions</i>	Assessment team (CJ) Belstat
15:30 - 15:45	<i>Coffee break</i>	
15:45 - 17:00	<b>Additional session on social statistics (population census, LFS, living conditions survey)</b>	Assessment team (RL, GG) Belstat
15:45 - 16:30	<b>In-depth review of tourism statistics</b> <i>Presentation by Belstat (max 20 min), questions and discussions</i>	Assessment team (CJ) Belstat
16:30 - 17:00	<b>Review of service and transport statistics</b> <i>Presentation by Belstat (max 15 min), questions and discussions</i>	Assessment team (CJ) Belstat
17:00 - 17:30	<b>Additional review of short-term statistics</b> <i>Questions and discussions</i>	Assessment team (CJ) Belstat

### Day 3: Friday, 22 March 2013

09:15 - 10:15	<b>Meeting with staff who have been in the office for around 5 years</b>	Assessment team (RL, GG, CJ) Belstat
10:15 - 11:00	<b>Review of the interaction between Belstat, National Bank and Ministry of Finance</b> <i>Presentation by Belstat (max 15 min), questions and discussions</i>	Assessment team (RL, GG, CJ) Belstat
11:00 - 11:15	<i>Coffee break</i>	
11:15 - 13:00	<b>Meeting with middle managers</b>	Assessment team (RL, GG, CJ) Belstat
13:00 - 14:00	<i>Lunch break</i>	
14:00 - 15:30	<b>Final meeting</b>	Assessment team (RL, GG, CJ) Belstat
18:00	<i>Dinner</i>	

Law on Official Statistics of the Republic of Belarus

**LAW OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS**

November 28, 2004, No 345-3

On State Statistics

Adopted by the Chamber of Representatives on October 29, 2004 Approved by the Council of the Republic on November 10, 2004

Amendments:

Law of the Republic of Belarus of January 4, 2008 No 309-3 (National Register of Legal Acts of the Republic of Belarus, 2008, Issue No 6, 2/1406) <H10800309>;

Law of the Republic of Belarus of July 2, 2009 No 31-3 (National Register of Legal Acts of the Republic of Belarus, 2009, Issue No 161, 2/1583) <H10900031>

**SECTION 1 GENERAL PROVISIONS**

Article 1. Main terms applied for the purposes of the present Law and their definitions

For the purposes of the present Law, the following terms and their definitions shall apply:

state statistics – the system of collection, processing, aggregation, accumulation, storage, protection, presentation, dissemination, and use by state statistics bodies and authorised state organisations of primary statistical data and summary statistical data (information) on economic, demographic, social, and environmental situation in the Republic of Belarus (hereinafter referred to as statistical data (information));

state statistical activity – activity related to the development, improvement, and use of statistical methodology as well as to the organisation and maintenance of state statistics;

state statistical observations – collection and processing of primary statistical data carried out by state statistics bodies and authorised state organisations;

decentralised state statistical observations – collection and processing of primary statistical data carried out by authorised state organisations;

state statistics bodies – the Republican government authority in the field of state statistics and territorial bodies of state statistics established by it;

primary statistical data – statistical data on a specific respondent submitted to state statistics bodies and authorised state organisations by means of the forms of state statistical observations;

keeping primary records – registration of objects, facts, events, and processes in a primary record document, which is the source of information for accounting;

user – government agencies, legal entities and natural persons, including individual entrepreneurs, foreign citizens, persons without citizenship, foreign and international legal entities that make use of statistical data (information);

programme of statistical work – the list of state statistical observations and summary statistical data (information) compiled on the basis of their results, with the schedule of their preparation;

respondent – a subject of legal relations in the field of state statistics, primary statistical data thereon being the object of state statistical observations in the manner prescribed by the legislation of the Republic of Belarus;

summary statistical data (information) – the information on economic, demographic, social, and ecological situation in the Republic of Belarus obtained by means of processing and aggregation of primary statistical data;

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statistical methodology – the set of methods, rules and techniques that are applied for the organisation and maintenance of state statistics;

statistical indicator – an indicator either contained in the forms of state statistical observations or obtained by means of estimation on the basis of methods approved by the Republican government authority in the field of state statistics;

statistical register – the list of respondents containing the information thereon required for the organisation of state statistical observations;

authorised state organisations – government agencies (organisations), excluding state statistics bodies, that maintain state statistics pertaining to the organisations subordinate to them (under their authority) as well as to the issues falling within their competence;

centralised state statistical observations – collection and processing of primary statistical data performed by state statistics bodies.

## Article 2. Relations regulated by the present Law

The present Law shall specify the manner of the organisation and maintenance of state statistics in the Republic of Belarus, and regulate the relations associated with the performance of state statistical activity.

## Article 3. Legislation of the Republic of Belarus on state statistics

1. The legislation of the Republic of Belarus on state statistics shall be based on the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus and shall consist of the present Law and other acts of legislation of the Republic of Belarus.

2. In case the international agreements, to which the Republic of Belarus is a party, establish regulations other than those contained in the present Law, the regulations of the international agreements shall apply.

## Article 4. Main tasks of state statistics

The main tasks of state statistics shall be as follows:

development of scientifically grounded methodology and its improvement in compliance with the national and international standards in the field of statistics;

collection, processing, aggregation, accumulation, storage and protection of statistical data (information) on the basis of statistical methodology;

submission of summary statistical data (information) to the President of the Republic of Belarus, the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus, the Administration of the President of the Republic of Belarus, the State Control Committee of the Republic of Belarus, Republican government authorities and other state organisations subordinate to the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus, to regional and Minsk city executive committees;

dissemination of summary statistical data (information).

## Article 5. Main principles of state statistics

The main principles of state statistics shall be as follows:

professional independence;

rationality in choosing the modes to collect primary statistical data;

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scientific validity, reliability and objectivity of statistical data (information);  
relevance and timeliness of statistical data (information);  
confidentiality of primary statistical data;  
comparability of statistical data (information);  
accessibility and openness of summary statistical data (information).

#### Article 6. International co-operation in the field of state statistics

1. International co-operation in the field of state statistics shall be effected in compliance with the legislation of the Republic of Belarus on the basis of observance of the generally recognised principles and norms of the international law.

2. The Republican government authority in the field of state statistics, in the established by the legislation of the Republic of Belarus manner, shall represent and protect the interests of the Republic of Belarus in the field of state statistics, and shall effect co-operation with statistical agencies of foreign states and international organisations in the field of statistics.

#### Article 6<sup>1</sup>. Interagency Council on State Statistics

1. The Interagency Council on State Statistics is an advisory body established by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus in order to ensure coordinated decision-making as pertaining to the organisation of state statistical observations.

2. The composition of the Interagency Council on State Statistics and its statute shall be approved by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus as suggested by the Republican government authority in the field of state statistics.

3. Organisational and information support of the Interagency Council on State Statistics activity shall be ensured by the Republican government authority in the field of state statistics.

### SECTION 2 SUBJECTS OF LEGAL RELATIONS IN THE FIELD OF STATE STATISTICS, THEIR RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS

#### Article 7. Subjects of legal relations in the field of state statistics

1. The subjects of legal relations in the field of state statistics shall be as follows:

1.1. state statistics bodies;

1.2. authorised state organisations;

1.3. respondents:

legal entities of the Republic of Belarus, separate units thereof;

representative offices of foreign organisations situated in the territory of the Republic of Belarus.

2. Horticultural societies, as well as natural persons including individual entrepreneurs, foreign citizens and persons without citizenship shall be respondents of special state statistical observations only (one-time recording, censuses, surveys), unless otherwise prescribed by the legislative acts of the Republic of Belarus.

#### Article 8. System of state statistics bodies

1. The system of state statistics bodies shall include:

1.1. Republican government authority in the field of state statistics;

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1.2. territorial bodies of state statistics.

2. The Republican government authority in the field of state statistics shall pursue the state policy in the field of state statistics, shall exercise regulation, administration and co-ordination of the activities of other government agencies and other organisations in this field.

3. Territorial bodies of state statistics shall be bodies established by the Republican government authority in the field of state statistics in the corresponding administrative-territorial units. Territorial bodies of state statistics shall include main statistical departments of the regions and Minsk-City.

4. The structure of main statistical departments of the regions and Minsk-City shall include statistical divisions in districts, cities and towns (districts of Minsk-City).

5. Territorial bodies of state statistics shall be subordinate to the Republican government authority in the field of state statistics and shall act in conformity with the statutes to be approved by this authority.

6. The Republican government authority in the field of state statistics, to exercise the functions vested in it, may establish organisations in the manner prescribed by the legislation of the Republic of Belarus.

#### Article 9. Rights and responsibilities of state statistics bodies

1. The state statistics bodies shall have the right to:

1.1. engage, in the manner prescribed by the Republican government authority in the field of state statistics, respondents in conducting of state statistical observations;

1.2. receive from respondents on a free-of-charge basis, in the manner prescribed by the Republican government authority in the field of state statistics, primary statistical data in the volume and by the deadlines specified in the state statistical observation forms;

1.3. check the validity of primary statistical data by comparing them with the records in primary accounting documents; visit for this purpose the territory and premises (except for living quarters) of government agencies, of other organisations (except of organisations enjoying diplomatic immunities under international treaties, to which the Republic of Belarus is a party) and separate units thereof, as well as of individual entrepreneurs;

1.4. provide respondents with the mandatory instructions on how to eliminate the detected distortions in the state statistical reporting data, and make the corresponding changes to summary statistical data (information);

1.5. omitted;

1.6. take decisions, within their competence, that shall be binding upon respondents;

1.7. receive, in the manner prescribed by the legislation of the Republic of Belarus, the information from the Single State Register of Legal Entities and Individual Entrepreneurs, other registers (records) and databases that are maintained by the government agencies and other state organisations;

1.8. compile and maintain a statistical register;

1.9. receive from government agencies and other organisations the information required for the organisation and conducting of state statistical observations and compilation of summary statistical data (information);

1.10. provide clarifications, including those in the mass media, on the organisation and maintaining of state statistics in the Republic of Belarus;

1.11. effect co-operation with statistical agencies of foreign states and international organisations in the field of statistics;



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1.12. disseminate summary statistical data (information) on a payment basis, unless otherwise prescribed by the legislation of the Republic of Belarus, and provide other information services in the manner prescribed by the legislation of the Republic of Belarus.

2. The state statistics bodies shall be responsible for:

2.1. development and improvement of statistical methodology in compliance with the national and international standards in the field of statistics;

2.2. organisation and conducting of centralised state statistical observations;

2.3. provision of methodological guidance for the organisation and conducting of centralised state statistical observations;

2.4. provision in the mass media of required clarifications on the use of methodology for the compilation of statistical data (information) and required information on the general changes in state statistics;

2.5. provision of users with summary statistical data (information) in the manner prescribed by the legislation of the Republic of Belarus;

2.6. exchange of summary statistical data (information) with statistical agencies of foreign states as well as the provision of summary statistical data (information) under the international treaties to which the Republic of Belarus is a party;

2.7. provision of respondents on a free-of-charge basis with blank forms of centralised state statistical observations together with the instructions for completing thereof in a quantity required to submit the forms to the addresses specified therein;

2.8. ensuring of accumulation, storage and protection of statistical data (information);

2.9. ensuring of confidentiality of primary statistical data and use thereof for the purposes of state statistics;

2.10. preservation of state secrets as well as of commercial, personal, and other secrets protected by the legislation of the Republic of Belarus.

3. The state statistics bodies shall also enjoy other rights and fulfill other responsibilities provided for by other acts of legislation of the Republic of Belarus.

#### Article 10. Inadmissibility of interference into state statistical activity

Illegitimate interference into the state statistical activity shall not be permitted.

#### Article 11. Rights and responsibilities of the authorised state organisations

1. Authorised state organisations shall have the right to:

1.1. engage, in the manner prescribed by the Republican government authority in the field of state statistics, respondents in conducting of state statistical observations;

1.2. receive from respondents, in the manner prescribed by the Republican government authority in the field of state statistics, primary statistical data in the volume and by the deadlines specified in the state statistical observation forms;

1.3. check the validity of primary statistical data provided by respondents by comparing them with the records in primary accounting documents.

2. Authorised state organisations shall be responsible for:

2.1. development of draft forms of decentralised state statistical observations and instructions for completing thereof, and submit them to the Republican government authority in the field of state statistics for approval;

2.2. provision of methodological guidance for the organisation and conducting of decentralised state statistical observations;

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2.3. collection and processing of primary statistical data using the forms of decentralised state statistical observations;

2.4. provision of state statistics bodies, upon their request, with summary statistical data (information) obtained as a result of decentralised state statistical observations;

2.5. provision of respondents on a free-of-charge basis with blank forms of decentralised state statistical observations together with the instructions for completing thereof in a quantity required to submit the forms to the addresses specified therein;

2.6. ensuring of accumulation, storage and protection of statistical data (information);

2.7. exercising of control over primary records in the organisations that are subordinate to them (under their supervision) and are respondents;

2.8. ensuring of confidentiality of primary statistical data;

2.9. preservation of state secrets as well as of commercial, personal, and other secrets protected by the legislation of the Republic of Belarus.

3. Authorised state organisations shall also enjoy other rights and fulfill other responsibilities provided for by other acts of legislation of the Republic of Belarus.

#### Article 12. Rights and responsibilities of respondents

1. Respondents shall have the right to:

1.1. receive on a free-of-charge basis from state statistics bodies and authorised state organisations blank forms of state statistical observations together with the instructions for completing thereof in a quantity required to submit the forms to the addresses specified therein;

1.2. receive from state statistics bodies and authorised state organisations, in the manner prescribed by them, primary statistical data accumulated on each respondent respectively;

1.3. receive and make use of summary statistical data (information) in the manner prescribed by the present Law and other acts of legislation of the Republic of Belarus.

2. Respondents shall be responsible for:

2.1. submission of primary statistical data on a free-of-charge basis for the purposes of state statistical observations unless otherwise prescribed by the legislation of the Republic of Belarus;

2.2. submission of valid primary statistical data under the signature of persons responsible for the compilation and submission thereof, in the volume, by the deadlines, and to the addresses specified in the state statistical observation forms;

2.3. performance of the decisions of state statistics bodies and authorised state organisations taken within their competence.

3. Respondents shall also enjoy other rights and fulfill other responsibilities provided for by other acts of legislation of the Republic of Belarus.

### SECTION 3 PERFORMANCE OF STATE STATISTICAL ACTIVITY

#### Article 13. Maintenance of state statistics

1. State statistics in the Republic of Belarus shall be maintained by the state statistics bodies and authorised state organisations in conformity with their jurisdiction.

2. State statistics bodies shall maintain state statistics on the basis of the forms of centralised state statistical observations in conformity with the instructions for completing thereof, methods of the compilation and calculation of statistical indicators, and instructions on the organisation and conducting of state statistical observations to be approved by the Republican government authority in the field of state statistics.

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3. Authorised state organisations shall maintain state statistics within their competence using the developed by them forms of decentralised state statistical observations and instructions for completing thereof to be approved by the Republican government authority in the field of state statistics.

#### Article 14. Programme of statistical work

1. The activity of state statistics bodies shall be performed on the basis of the programme of statistical work to be approved by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus.

2. Decision on the introduction of amendments and / or additions to the programme of statistical work shall be taken by the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus as proposed by the Republican government authority in the field of state statistics.

3. The programme of statistical work shall be developed by the Republican government authority in the field of state statistics on the basis of rational choice of sources to obtain primary statistical data for the purpose of compilation of summary statistical data (information) to ensure their completeness and reliability, scientific validity and objectivity, relevance and timeliness of provision, taking account of user interests, and to reduce the respondent burden.

#### Article 15. Financial provision of state statistics bodies activity

1. The activity of state statistics bodies shall be financed out of the funds of the Republican budget and from other sources that are not prohibited by the legislation of the Republic of Belarus.

2. Centralised state statistical observations that are not included in the programme of statistical work shall be organised and conducted out of the funds envisaged for these purposes for the government agencies, in conformity with the legislation of the Republic of Belarus, as well as from the funds of organisations initiating these observations.

#### Article 16. State statistical observations

1. State statistical observations shall be conducted by means of the forms of state statistical observations in conformity with the instructions for completing thereof, methods of the compilation and calculation of statistical indicators, and instructions on the organisation and conducting of state statistical observations.

2. Centralised and decentralised state statistical observations, depending on the procedure of collection and processing of primary statistical data, can be either total or incomplete (sample), systematic (conducted on a regular basis), and special.

3. The forms of state statistical observations shall be as follows:

3.1. state statistical reporting;

3.2. an inquiry form;

3.3. a questionnaire;

3.4. a census questionnaire;

3.5. other forms of state statistical observations to be approved by the Republican government authority in the field of state statistics.

4. Respondents can be engaged in conducting of the state statistical observations in the manner prescribed by the Republican government authority in the field of state statistics.

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## SECTION 4 SUBMISSION, DISSEMINATION AND USE OF STATISTICAL DATA (INFORMATION)

### Article 17. Submission of primary statistical data

1. Respondents shall submit primary statistical data by means of the forms of state statistical observations.

2. On conducting state statistical observations, the submission of primary statistical data shall be binding upon respondents and shall be performed on a free-of-charge basis, unless otherwise prescribed by the legislation of the Republic of Belarus.

### Article 18. Dissemination and use of statistical data (information)

1. State statistics bodies and authorised state organisations shall disseminate summary statistical data (information) among users in the manner prescribed by the present Law and other acts of legislation of the Republic of Belarus.

2. The following categories may also be subject to dissemination:

2.1. depersonalised primary statistical data that do not allow for the identification of an individual respondent;

2.2. information on the name, location, telephone numbers, types of activity, and ownership forms of legal entities and their separate units.

3. Primary statistical data shall be confidential and shall be used for the compilation of summary statistical data (information). Dissemination of primary statistical data shall be permitted upon the written consent of the respondent who submitted these data.

4. Summary statistical data (information) shall be used for the purposes of state administration, scientific research, and for informing users.

5. Statistical data (information) that contain state secrets as well as commercial, personal and other secrets protected by the legislation of the Republic of Belarus shall not be subject to disclosure and shall be protected in the manner prescribed by the legislation of the Republic of Belarus.

### Article 19. Compilation and maintenance of statistical register

State statistics bodies shall compile and keep a statistical register on the basis of the information submitted in the manner prescribed by the present Law and other legislation of the Republic of Belarus as well as received from the Uniform State Register of Legal Entities and Individual Entrepreneurs, other registers (records) and databases that are maintained by the government agencies and other state organisations.

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## SECTION 5 LIABILITY FOR VIOLATION OF THE LEGISLATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS IN THE FIELD OF STATE STATISTICS

### Article 20. Liability for infringement upon submission procedure and for distortion of state statistical reporting data

Officials and other authorised persons, individual entrepreneurs as well as legal entities shall bear liability for the infringement upon submission procedure and for distortion of state statistical reporting data in conformity with the legislation of the Republic of Belarus.

### Article 21. Liability for violations in the performance of state statistical activity

Officials and other employees of state statistics bodies and authorised state organisations shall bear liability for violations in the performance of state statistical activity in conformity with the legislation of the Republic of Belarus.

## SECTION 6 FINAL PROVISIONS

### Article 22. Entry into force

The present Law shall enter into force ten days after its official publication.

### Article 23. Bringing of acts of legislation of the Republic of Belarus in line with the present Law

The Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus in a six-month period after the present Law enters into force to ensure that the acts of legislation of the Republic of Belarus shall be brought in line with the present Law.

### Article 24. Recognition of the legislative act as ceased to be in force

With the adoption of the present Law, to recognise the Law of the Republic of Belarus of February 17, 1997 'On State Statistics' (Vedamastsi Natsyianalnaha skhodu Respubliki Belarus, 1997, Issue No. 7, article 164) as ceased to be in force.

**President of the Republic of Belarus**